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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE CHURCH IN SWEDEN	<i>Peter Hornung</i> 5
BARON VON HÜGEL: LETTERS TO A NIECE	<i>Michael Hanbury</i> 13
JOHANN TAULER	<i>James M. Clark</i> 23
ANVIL-DING AND TONGUE THAT TOLD: I. THE EARLY JOURNALS AND PAPERS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS	<i>W. H. Gardner</i> 34
CHRISTIANITY AT OSTIA: A NEW SURVEY	<i>P. G. Walsh</i> 47
REVIEWS	52

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THE CHURCH IN SWEDEN

By

PETER HORNUNG

SWEDEN is about twice as large as Great Britain, and covers the greatest area of any diocese in Europe. It belongs to the group of Scandinavian countries which has a smaller percentage of Catholics than any country in Europe. The population of between seven and eight million includes only 28,000 Catholics, and more than two-thirds of these are foreign refugees or workers who came to Sweden after 1940. The number of Catholics of Swedish origin may amount to less than six thousand, or about one per thousand of the population.

Pre-Reformation Sweden was strongly Catholic. St. Ansgar and a group of German monks began Christianising the country in the ninth century, and were followed in the tenth century by English missionaries, among whom was St. Sigfrid. In 1087 the pagan centre of Old Uppsala was destroyed, and in 1164 Sweden became an independent Church Province, with the Archbishopric of Uppsala, and the Bishoprics of Skara, Linköping, Växjö, Strängnäs, Västerås, and Abo in Finland. In 1143, in St. Bernard's lifetime, the Cistercians were established, and were followed by Franciscans and Dominicans. The great Order of the Brigittines owes its origin and inspiration to Sweden's greatest saint, Bridget. She was born into a noble family in about 1303, married young and had eight children. After her husband's death in 1334 she withdrew from the Court where she had been Mistress of the Robes, lived for some time with the Cistercians at Alvastra and then from 1349 in Rome. The saint, inspired by her visions and revelations, admonished the ecclesiastical and secular authorities for their laxity and corruption. In 1370 the Mother House of the Brigittines was built at Vadstena, and her daughter, St. Catherine, was its first Abbess. The Order spread, and at the time of the Reformation there were seventy Brigittine monasteries in Europe, including Syon Abbey in England, which gave a martyr to the Church, Blessed Richard Reynolds, who was executed in 1535.

The fifteenth century was the finest period in Sweden's

spiritual and artistic life. In 1477 the first Swedish University was founded at Uppsala, and about two thousand five hundred churches of that period, many of them still well preserved, show with their frescoes and gothic altars the flourishing state of religious art.

The Reformation, which was sponsored by King Gustav Vasa for political and economic reasons, began in 1527 as an alteration in Church policy, but by 1593 had developed into a dogmatic revolution. External Catholic practices survived for a long time, but the attempt at a reunion with Rome made by John III, one of Gustav Vasa's sons, was a failure. The history of the attempts to recover Sweden for the Church has not yet been written. The Society of Jesus played the most important part in this struggle, in particular Fr. Antonio Possevino and several other Jesuits, who worked with King John III. But Catholicism was violently and successfully suppressed, and in Sweden there is no line of continuity such as exists in England. There were single conversions, among the most famous being Queen Christina, daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, who was received into the Church in 1654 and, like all converts, forced to leave the country.

Religious freedom is a comparatively recent innovation in Swedish law. In 1783 foreigners living in Sweden were allowed to practise their religion, but the Swedes themselves were not given this freedom until 1873. On 1 January 1952 the law that restored to Catholics most of the rights of citizenship came into force, having been passed by Parliament and the General Church Meeting in 1951. The credit for this new law belongs to the (Lutheran) Church of Sweden. It had been advocated for many years by the atheistic Liberals and by the free religious groups which had remained, at least formally, within the Church of Sweden. The liberal movement within the Swedish Church supported the Lutheran principle of subjective freedom of faith, and conceded liberty and independence to Catholics.

This freedom, however, is not complete. Difficulties arise out of the regulations governing schools and religious houses. Although the Catholics receive no State assistance to build or maintain their churches and schools, yet they have to contribute two-thirds of the State Church tax *per capita*. Though no compulsory civil marriage is required, Catholic couples must obtain a marriage licence from the Protestant Registrar's office if their

marriage is to have full legal status; and the Swedish (Protestant) clergy keep the registers. Such problems as these are part of the complex relationship between Church and State. During the past few years, the situation has become more strained, and it seems that a radical solution must soon be found.

The situation of Swedish Catholics is a desperate one. They are surrounded by a materialistic and amoral society, without the balancing influence of Catholic thought and the example of a Christian way of life. They are living in a country where the majority of people have dispensed with Christ, and believe that they have exhausted the usefulness of Christianity. Their leader since 1957 has been His Lordship Bishop Ansgar Nelson, O.S.B. He is a Dane by birth, was converted in the United States and entered the Benedictine Order in 1930. In 1947 he became Coadjutor to His Lordship Bishop Johan Erick Müller, who retired shortly before his eightieth birthday after thirty-four years of office.

The influx of foreign Catholics in the last few decades has meant the establishment of several new parishes. Many new chapels have been established, the number of priests has increased from thirteen to fifty-eight and several Orders of nuns have been asked to work in the country, for example, the Grey Sisters of St. Elizabeth, the Dominican Sisters and the Brigittines. About half the clergy are diocesan priests, and the others come from various Orders. The Jesuits were established in 1879, the Salesians in 1930, the Dominicans in 1934. In 1951 the English Passionists, following in the tracks of the English missionary St. Sigfrid, came to work in the southern province of Smaland and Blekinge. But of the sixty-one priests who serve the entire country only eight are of Swedish descent.

A major problem for the parish priest is the isolation of the Catholics, who are scattered over wide areas and often have no contact with each other. It may help to give an idea of the size of the country if one realises that the distance from the south of Sweden to the extreme north is the same as the distance to Rome or Naples. More than half the country forms the single parish of Norrland, which is the largest parish in Europe, and is served by one priest. Very often, because of the geographical difficulties, the Catholics do not know each other, can only occasionally hear Mass, and even more rarely a sermon.

The large majority of foreigners among the Catholic population present special problems. They do help to emphasise the catholicity of the Church, as in Uppsala, for example, where a community of a hundred Catholics of fifteen nations sing the Missa Cantata; but they tend to give the non-Catholic Swedes the unfortunate impression that Catholicism is something foreign. Many new parishes and Mass centres have been established to deal with the influx of foreign Catholics, for some of them settle permanently in Sweden, and their children must be educated and their families incorporated into the Catholic parishes. At Västerås, for example, which has fifteen hundred Catholics, only thirty of whom are Swedes, a parish life must be built up which appeals to the Swedes as well as to the newcomers. Many of the strangers stay only for a year or two, but it is essential that they should have spiritual guidance during that time to help them to guard against the prevailing atmosphere of amorality and indifference to religion.

The widespread materialism in Sweden makes it very difficult to gain converts. There are no mass conversions, and individuals are instructed in groups in the big cities. A fairly high percentage of them come from the educated classes and they have been led to the Church in various ways: some through their own studies, some by finding Catholic values in modern literature, others through travel abroad, where perhaps for the first time they may meet a Catholic, and experience a Christian way of life. There are people of the finest mental and spiritual calibre among these converts, and they play an important part in the development of the Church in their country. They come from Protestant sects as well as from completely de-Christianised circles, and are most often drawn to the Church by the search for truth, discovering it in the sense of reality and security that grace can bring them through the sacraments.

There are other problems which the Catholic Church in Sweden must face. She is poor, and in contrast with the lavish benefits of the welfare state, this poverty can give a sense of inferiority, particularly to children. Again, the very large number of divorces is an obstacle to conversions. One in three people willing to become a Catholic is either divorced or living with a divorced partner. A convert has very often to face isolation from family and friends, and this requires a great deal of personal courage.

The growth of the Church in Sweden depends to some extent on her relations with non-Catholic groups. About ninety-six per cent of the population belongs nominally to the Swedish Lutheran State Church, but an average of only four per cent practise their religion. The Church of Sweden maintains polite and friendly, sometimes cordial relations with the Catholic clergy and laity. Their attitude is based largely on a recognition of the fact that the Catholic Church in Sweden fosters the growth of a personal Christian life, and helps in the work of spreading the Gospel message. On the other hand, there is still a hard core of militant anti-Catholics, who regret to see "the heritage, for which the great Gustavus Adolphus gave his life" being undermined.

At the moment it is impossible to estimate the strength and importance of the High Church group, which almost certainly has some links with the Anglican Church. This group embraces both clergy and laity, and also has the support of certain eminent ecclesiastics, though it is often the object of attack. It is strongest in a number of central Swedish dioceses, where it is led by Gunnar Rosendahl, pastor in Osby, near Lund. The High Church movement also receives theological support from the so-called Uppsala Exegesis. It has adopted the external structure of the Catholic Church as it was in the first decades after the Reformation, and endeavours to prove its Apostolic succession. It recognises the need for a metaphysical foundation for faith, as well as for an authoritative doctrine. This reversion to principles is a natural reaction on the part of a group attempting to stand out against the whittling down of the essential doctrines of the faith, which is the consequence of an anti-intellectualist theology.

Though several new conversions have recently been reported, it cannot be assumed that the relationship of the Catholic Church with this group will ever advance much beyond friendly personal contact. There are conversions, but there is no sign of a mass conversion. A great deal depends on the issue of the controversial situation between Church and State. It is quite clear that the sphere of influence of the High Church group, and of the State Church itself, is so limited that the Catholic Church cannot hope that any radical change in its position will come about through their help.

According to a recently published survey there are nineteen

Protestant sects in Sweden, some within, some outside the State Church. With a few exceptions, their attitude towards Catholicism is considerably cooler than that of the Swedish Church, and one important sect, the Pentecostal Church of Philadelphia, is frankly hostile. The majority of people are, however, so de-Christianised that the usual Protestant prejudices against Catholicism no longer have any force. The national prejudice against the Church was based on the belief that the greatest era of Swedish history was linked with the ascendancy of Protestantism, but the general lack of interest in any religion has made this particular prejudice meaningless. Some atheists accuse the Catholic Church of spiritual and political dictatorship, but Swedish atheism is generally not positive and militant. It has its origin in a widespread agnosticism for which the theology of Lund is largely responsible.

If the Church is to grow in this all-pervading atmosphere of indifference, there is an urgent need for Catholic schools. The absence of Catholic education is causing many adolescents to leave the Church. There are Catholic elementary schools in Stockholm and Göteborg, but they are inadequate, and the Church authorities are restricted by the state from building all the schools they need. Shortage of money, however, is the main obstacle to building new elementary and comprehensive schools. The French Sisters of the Order of St. Joseph run a girls' High School in Stockholm which teaches to higher certificate level, but at the moment there seems little hope of starting the badly-needed boys' school.

Because of the lack of Catholic schools, serious religious training must be undertaken outside school hours. Most children receive their religious instruction in small groups after school in the house of the parish priest or in their own homes. On an average, children receive a maximum of forty-five minutes direct instruction a week, apart from hearing Mass, which many people cannot attend every Sunday. To supplement this, during the long vacation most parish priests try to gather the children in holiday camps in the country. Most children receive their only intensive religious instruction on these vacation courses, and are prepared for confession and communion. When they are older, many of them go abroad to study languages, and this gives the host-countries a valuable opportunity for simple and effective

missionary work. The weeks spent by Swedish students in an English, French or German Catholic family have proved to be of decisive importance in their religious lives. Catholic families in England could help greatly by receiving these students and giving them the opportunity to share in all the religious activities of the family and parish.

The instruction of both children and adults depends to a large extent on reading. At present there are only the most rudimentary facilities for publishing Catholic books. There is no daily Missal in Swedish, nor even a modern Catholic version of the Old and New Testament. The only regular publications are the bi-annual Diocesan magazine, the youth paper *St. Michael*, which appears eight times a year, and one cultural periodical called *Credo*, edited by the Jesuits, which enjoys considerable prestige even outside the Church. Recently non-Catholic publishers have brought out some Catholic books, but there are not enough original works or reliable translations. Despite diligent efforts, the number of manuals of religious instruction is still not sufficient to meet the growing demand or to satisfy the awakening interest of non-Catholics. Some progress has been made during the last few years. In a book entitled *Why I Became a Catholic*, twelve converts, headed by the author Sven Stolpe, who is known and admired abroad, explain the reasons for their conversion. This book attracted the interest of the press, and was generally well received. Catholic publications are of much greater importance to-day than they were a generation ago, for now the Swedes are prepared, as they were not before, to read about the Faith. The consequent demands on the limited number of trained writers, both clergy and laity, are very heavy, and once again the problem of insufficient funds arises.

The majority of converts come from the educated classes, and it is important that they should receive spiritual guidance appropriate to their particular needs. Students and Catholics with academic training in the four University towns of Uppsala, Lund, Stockholm and Göteborg have founded the A.C.S., the *Academicum Catholicum Sueciae*, which is the Swedish branch of the *Pax Romana* movement. The Jesuits in Uppsala and the Dominicans at Lund are in close contact with academic life: last year a Jesuit from Uppsala was the first Catholic priest to be appointed to the Summer School arranged by the Scandinavian Universities. But

Catholic organisations lack facilities such as suitable meeting-places and libraries.

Educated Catholics living in this large and sparsely populated country are in constant need of instruction and support, for they are often alone to defend the Catholic position, both in public and among their friends. Sweden needs priests, and well-qualified priests. They must first of all maintain a strong parochial life, keeping in contact with their parishioners, for this is the basis of all missionary work in this country. The priests must also be sympathetic and informed about the various intellectual and moral problems that concern the Swedish people in general, and be able to offer understanding and spiritual support. Above all, Sweden needs Swedish priests. Although all the eight Swedish priests are converts, vocations to the priesthood are fostered primarily in the atmosphere of the Catholic family, and these are rare, for mixed marriages are necessarily very frequent.

In spite, or perhaps because of all these difficulties, Catholic life in Sweden is fervent, deep and thoroughly joyous. Catholics are beginning to lose their sense of inferiority as they see that Protestants and atheists regard the Church with growing interest and respect. A Bishop of the Swedish State Church wrote in 1955 that if it was true to say that there was a revival of interest in Christianity in the world to-day, it must be acknowledged that it is aroused by the Catholic Church. In a publication called *Evangelical or Roman* another Protestant clergyman refers to three of the characteristics of the Church which makes Catholicism attractive: the security, the unity and the form of worship. The radical atheist Professor of Philosophy of Uppsala University has been giving lectures during the last few years in which he has expressed the view that Catholicism is the temptation of the intellectual. Interest has been aroused in questions of faith and doctrine with particular stress on religious philosophy; also in the Christian life based on careful observance of the liturgy, and in the activity of the Church in civic and national life.

Thus the Catholic Bishop, priests and laity of Sweden have every reason to face the future with great optimism. Obviously Sweden must still depend on spiritual and material help from other countries, for Swedish resources alone could never maintain parochial life, much less expand it. At no time since the Reformation, however, have there been better opportunities for

the fruitful extension of the Church here. The time may not be too far distant when Catholic life in Sweden, with its own specific values, will again demonstrate to the world the universal character of the Catholic Church.

BARON VON HÜGEL

Letters to a Niece

By

MICHAEL HANBURY

THERE have been few Catholics domiciled in Britain in the course of the last century to whom one could apply unhesitatingly the epithet great, but Friedrich von Hügel was certainly amongst them. This indeed is generally recognised: with Cardinal Newman and Lord Acton he is commonly ranked as one of our three greatest thinkers of the period. It is true that, for a variety of reasons, his fame has been higher outside the Church than within it; but for all that no well-informed Catholic would be likely to deny his outstanding gifts of mind and heart. An intellectual champion of the Church like Fr. M. C. D'Arcy, S.J., lately Provincial of the English Jesuits, Anglicans of the calibre of the late Bishop Gore and Dr. W. R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, the Lutheran Archbishop Söderblom of Uppsala, or a Jewish philanthropist like Sir Claude Montefiore, all these and many others have vied in testifying to the greatness of one whom Gore pronounced "the most learned man living."

But if Friedrich von Hügel was both great and immensely learned, it is equally clear that his fame based on his thought and writings will never be of a popular kind. Reasons for this are obvious: depth of thought, many-sidedness, literary style and choice of subjects are among the chief. Then, so far as Catholics are concerned, his close association with leading Modernists like Loisy and Tyrrell, in spite of fundamental differences of outlook, has inevitably awakened some distrust. Most pertinently of all he had no wish to be popular. To Mrs. Lillie, a distinguished

convert lady of Chicago whom he had helped into the Church, he wrote:

I have never written for the public at large, and I am most anxious that nothing I ever write should be pushed: Let these poor things go down and take root and produce fruit if and where and when the God Who is so kind to the birds and to the plants cares to bless them to this degree.

This detached, and to-day highly unusual, attitude towards popular appreciation, is typical of von Hügel, who cared little or nothing for current fashions of thought. He is best described as a pioneer and explorer in the realms of intellect and spirit, one who was absorbed in the quest for truth and who left it to others to pass on, as channels and filters, what was of value in his discoveries. Acutely conscious, as all deep thinkers must be, of the mysteries that surround us on every side, he strove to enlarge the borders of known truth. To this end he wanted all possible freedom for his researches, and to be able to submit the results for the consideration of rightful authority, thus fulfilling a function which he believed was even essential to the healthy life of the Church. As he wrote (of this particular vocation) in one of his essays—called “Official Authority and Living Religion”:

The lonely, new and daring (if but faithful, reverent and loving) outgoing of the explorer and investigator are as truly acts of, are as necessary parts of the Church and her life as his coming back to the Christian hive and community, which latter will then gradually test his contribution by tentative applications to its own life, and will in part assimilate, in part simply tolerate, in part finally reject it. And such a lonely venturesome outgoing appears, in all kinds of degree and form, in every sort of life.¹

This shows what he felt to be his own vocation in the Church—the Mystical Body of Christ in which we all have our different gifts and functions.

This quotation also gives at least a hint of another reason why the Baron could never be widely popular—his literary style. This has been abused a good deal as ponderous, involved, turgid, Germanic, etc., by unsympathetic critics, but it is only fair to allow that it has also great merits and that it exactly suited the man. It was a kind of thinking aloud. Von Hügel, who cared

¹ *Essay and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd series, pp. 16, 17.

much more for matter than for form, always aimed at the greatest possible exactness of expression and would leave nothing out. If twenty words would convey his meaning more completely than one word, the twenty would go in: hence his sentences are often extremely long and complicated. As was well said: "The intensity of his passion for intellectual honesty leads him to introduce qualifications of his statements and asides and parentheses which distract from the point at issue and are apt to bewilder the reader." But this is not the whole story, for he has also some of the qualities of a really great writer: he often breaks out into brilliant and vivid flashes, effective epigrams and pen portraits which are unforgettable; while the heavy grandeur of his piled-up sentences may be felt to give them a charm of their own. Still, one must acknowledge that many people will always find him practically unreadable.

But though, for the most part, von Hügel's writings appeal only to a comparative few, or *élite*, this is happily not always the case. There is especially the notable exception of his *Letters to a Niece*, published by the recipient three or four years after his death. Here, though the wisdom is of the ripest, the expression is clear and pleasing. Any thoughtful and fair-minded person may enjoy and draw profit from these pages; many have been charmed and fascinated by them. They have been called von Hügel's easiest and most popular book, and have won success even materially. Published originally by Messrs. Dent in 1928, they were reprinted twice in the year following and again in 1932, 1937, 1950 and 1958, sure index of a steady and lasting demand. An American edition of the book was brought out a few years ago¹ and bore the Imprimatur of the late lamented Cardinal Stritch. It was quite a novelty for one of the Baron's books to carry an Imprimatur: he never sought it himself because, as already indicated, he aimed much less to expound received Catholic doctrine than to submit new theories and conclusions to the judgment of the teaching Church. He addressed himself moreover rather to intellectual people on the borders of theism, striving to bring them more completely to belief in the reality of God, a subject in which he specially excelled, than to the ordinary faithful.

It follows that his approach to and discussion of religious

¹ Henry Regnery Co., Chicago, 1955.

problems was nearly always highly individual and sometimes seemed unusual for a Catholic. Even in his *Letters to a Niece* there are ideas which some may find difficult, and some Catholics have been put off in particular by the Baron's apparent reluctance to make converts. This point alone would need a separate article to do it justice, but I am convinced that, if all factors are taken into account, von Hügel's view of the matter is just and reasonable. He can quote, for example, the opinion of Dr. Brownlow, a one-time Bishop of Clifton, as practically identical with his own. The fact is the Baron took a very deep and spiritual view of what is called Conversion, and focused more attention on the inner change and growth that should accompany it than on the actual step of submitting to the Church; for he knew, not least from his own wide experience of converts, that this last could be done from all sorts of erroneous or insufficient reasons.

The favoured recipient of *Letters to a Niece*, Gwendolen Plunket Greene, wife of the famous singer Harry Plunket Greene, was the Baron's niece by marriage. Von Hügel had married the eldest daughter of Sidney Herbert, the Victorian statesman, and his wife Lady Herbert of Lea, a famous convert to the Church in the 'sixties. Gwen Greene's mother was Sidney Herbert's second daughter, while her father was the world-renowned musician and composer Sir Hubert Parry. As a small girl Gwen used to meet von Hügel—"Uncle Freddy" she always called him—at Herbert House in Belgravia, and very likely also at Wilton, the stately country-seat of the Herberts, Lords Pembroke, near Salisbury. Her memories of these early encounters are amusing. In her Introduction to the *Letters* she says:

I had known him as a child, but I was afraid of him then. I was afraid first of his deafness and of his ear-trumpet; and next I was afraid of his strangeness. When I saw him at my grandmother's I always hoped that I would not have to sit next him at luncheon. I liked to watch him, but I dreaded to attract his attention. He seemed to me something so different and unordinary, something rather wild, a being belonging to another world. When, years later, he first began to talk to me, he told me how he had never forgotten the strange little girl who used to sit and stare at him—and how he had said to my aunt "I feel so sorry for that poor little thing; she will never fit into this world, she comes from another star."¹

¹ *Letters to a Niece*, p. 94.

There was indeed a marked strain of unworldliness in both which helps to explain why they got on so well together and they also shared a deep humility. Gwen Greene was nearly forty and had three children in their teens, when her real intimacy with her uncle began; yet she says that she always felt like a child with him and never attempted to be anything else.

He wrote to her first, in April 1918, to console her in the last illness of her adored father. He wrote again—a beautiful letter—on that same father's death soon after. Gradually he realised her need for his help, comfort and instruction in her life which, for various reasons, was always a difficult one. Docility, teachableness, was one of the Baron's favourite virtues, and he held strong opinions on how greatly we can and ought to learn from others: when he found an apt and docile pupil, he delighted to pass on some of the fruits of his long life of prayer and spiritual and mental strivings. Like his own spiritual director, the saintly Abbé Huvelin (also the director of Charles de Foucauld) he held that "To sanctify is the biggest thing out." His niece says: "His plan was all thought out; he wanted to try and strengthen my character, feed my soul: and I was to learn through history, as well as through religion itself. 'I want to prepare you, to organise you, for illness, crisis and death; Live all you can—as complete and full a life as you can find—do as much as you can for others. Read, work, enjoy—love and help as many souls—do all this. Yes—but remember: be alone, be remote, be away from the world, be desolate. Then you will be near God!'"

He began then to write to her often, and they met also for regular talks. In case it may seem that her Uncle's line towards his niece was unduly grave and serious, it may be added that she says also:

My uncle was a great laugher, and much later on when he was teaching me definitely religious things, there used to come such shouts of laughter from the garden where we sat, that his daughter remarked to me that religion must be the most amusing thing in the world, judging by the laughter she heard.¹

They began with a history of Rome. He took her through pagan history and literature—his niece's devotion to Plato was lifelong—and then through the early centuries of the Christian Church, devoting special attention to his favourite, St. Augustine. And

¹ *Two Witnesses*, by Gwendolen Greene (Dent, 1930), p. 94.

there was too the more exclusively religious training, when he explained the thoughts and doctrine of St. Bernard, Dante, Fénelon, Père Grou and others, not forgetting that of his great personal friend and adviser, Abbé Huvelin, of whom he declared: "I owe more to this Frenchman than to any [other] man I have ever known in the flesh."¹

All this time his niece was an Anglican, though she says that she had never felt any need for institutional religion until her uncle began to teach her. He, for his part, was always careful not to influence her unduly towards the Church in which he believed. While he did in fact make a good many converts, he never set out to do it. His way of helping souls was to encourage them to follow what was right and true in their own religions, thus helping them to keep their minds open to any further light that God might wish to give them. To his niece he wrote: ". . . I find God in His goodness has given you a very—a sensitively Catholic mind; that I never think of you, feel you as a Protestant at all, but as an elementary, inchoate deep Catholic soul. I think you really seize upon and feed upon those doctrines and practices in Anglicanism which, thank God, are Catholic, and there's an end on't."² Under his training she drew nearer and nearer to the Church, though she was not "received" till after his death.

The letters were written more or less regularly during the last six years of von Hügel's life, the last dating from about four months before he died in January 1925. His niece confessed that unhappily she lost some of the earlier letters and postcards—the Baron could say a surprising lot on a postcard—but by far the greater number she preserved till shortly before her own death in 1959 at the age of eighty-one. In the previous autumn, when her health had finally broken down and she was shortly going to the nursing-home near Bath where she died in the following July, she gave a large cardboard box containing the letters to Mr. T. F. Burns, an old and valued friend, who had visited her. Mr. Burns has very kindly lent the letters to the present writer, to look through and comment upon.

Naturally one turned with special interest to the unpublished letters, which proved to be comparatively few. There are only about twenty of them, including a few postcards, as compared with the eighty or so printed in *Letters to a Niece*. It is a striking

¹ Life, p. 47.

² From letter 8 December 1920.

tribute to the quality of the Baron's letters that such a large proportion of them were found to deserve publication, but he was a man who gave care and concentration to anything he did.

Von Hügel's handwriting, especially in later life, might be called rugged. Though not usually difficult to read when one gets used to it, a word or two here and there may be completely baffling. One such example occurs in some sentences in which he affirms strikingly the reality of his faith. He writes:

Another more general and much deeper thing I have again (as in former incapacitations) been noticing with deepest thankfulness is how utterly true, how alone adequate is the Christian set of facts and laws—the theistic, Xtian Catholic outlook. It is splendid to see how the more it is tested the more it proves its incomparable truth. Especially the of all we may see and will: it is at such times that one sees it utterly, doesn't one?^x

After many attempts I have had to give up trying to make out the word that follows "Especially the" in the last sentence. The "incapacitations" the Baron refers to were those of health. Besides his deafness, which came on after an illness of typhoid fever when he was eighteen, he was hampered by ill-health all his life, but especially in his younger days. Earlier in this same letter there are some rather touching references to this. He says:

I have found once more the great advantage of having physically never had youth—never any *joie de vivre*, because I thus quite escape comparing my strength at 70 with that at 17 or 27 or 37: as a matter of fact I am stronger (except these last 3 or 4 weeks) at 70 than ever I was at those ages.

There is much about health in these letters, which is no doubt partly why they were not chosen for publication. Another reason is that they contain a good deal about private family and domestic affairs. One letter, though this is exceptional, gives an intimate account of three or four generations of an old Catholic family, and is so private that the Baron forbade his niece to show it to anyone else.

The reason that health looms so large in these letters is that both the Baron and his niece were poorly when many of them were written. Gwendolen Greene, always a very generous and charitable soul, was apt to give out far more of her strength than

¹ Letter, 29 July 1922.

she could spare in helping other people; she was during part of this period threatened with a nervous breakdown, and her uncle took great pains to impress upon her that she must take more care of herself. With his usual attention to detail he drew up for her a careful programme for three months' rest and change, to which he contributed financially. He himself had to do all he could to preserve his own health and strength in order to finish some important works. His seventieth birthday fell in May 1922, and on 1 June following Edinburgh University elected him Gifford Lecturer for 1924-5 and 1925-6, a very high distinction. He much hoped to live and be fit for the four years involved in this undertaking, but soon found that he could not reasonably expect it. He continued, however, with his last book *The Reality of God* which was to have been the basis for his lectures; this was left unfinished and published posthumously.

Most of these unpublished letters and postcards allude to the amount he had to do, and they also show his affectionate interest in his niece's family and all her concerns. Here is one typical postcard as an example:

13 Vicarage Gate, London W.1. Jan 8, 1921.

Child mine! You see at last I have to finish up all that Essays vol. ready for the printers—I signed my agreement with Dent for it, at last on 6th—day before yesterday. And this work, as it is now required, because of the great cost of any change in print, is very exacting. So I dare not write a proper, long letter till I have that big weight off my mind and brain. Also the Xmas and New Year letters, presents . . . have swarmed round me like mosquito swarms in Italy—but it is now quieting down. I will try to write you such cards as this at least once a week till I can do better.—This today would only say (1). How sorry I am poor O. has been so severely ill, and how glad I am she's now so much better. (2) How full of touchingness I feel R.'s condition, with his love and admiration for you: if you remain and become more and more humble, patient, selfless, God-dependent . . . you will surely keep, will surely win him fully. (3). My darling little J. M. has badly broken down in her nerve-health, the effect now only come from the fearful long strain of her heroic war work. Pray specially for her to-morrow 9th, at H. Com., since I hope she will resume her frequentations then. If you pray much you will instinctively feel how easy it is for us to get away from our own best lights. H.

P.S. Please thank D. for his pleasant little letter.

It cannot be said that these unpublished letters add appreciably to our understanding of the thought and personality of Friedrich von Hügel—we knew too much about him already for that. A large number of his letters, of course, have been published by others besides his niece, notably by Mr. Bernard Holland. Then, the capital *Life* by Count Michael de la Bédoyère, the well-known editor of the *Catholic Herald* and always an ardent disciple of the Baron, has told us much; while the fine study of von Hügel's teaching and philosophy by the Abbé Maurice Nédoncelle, Professor of Fundamental Theology at the University of Strasbourg,¹ is also very helpful. Many others, too, have written about him.

One thing at least these letters do, however, is to add yet further evidence of the Baron's practical saintliness and mastery of the spiritual life. Some of his advice of this nature here given is most valuable, though there is room for only one example. This concerns the really crucifying yet not uncommon trial when, with much that is pressing and important to do, one can only go on very slowly and intermittently on account of weak health. To illustrate the point I quote a quarter of a long letter which he wrote to his niece on this subject:

13 Vicarage Gate, W.8 28th March, 1922
Ever darling Gwen Child

You have done quite right not to write for that long. Pray, dear, continue this plan—I mean, never force yourself to write. For, on my part, it is, of course, certain, that I am always most glad to hear from you. As you get rested and stronger again, you will quite naturally feel it little or no effort to write; and *then*, as often as you feel quietly inclined that way the old Uncle-Father will love to get your letters or notes.

My Dearie, I am in very good conditions for giving you hints as to how to manage yourself in this weak health; for I myself have so generally broken nights and often all but empty days, with those miseries of, as it were, being thrown into one's own machinery—having strength almost only for sorry hurtness, self-occupations, etc., so I have indeed a right to speak on the subject. I will try to make it all very simple and directly applied to your own case.

I think then, in all such cases, therefore also in yours, we are

¹ Now Dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology.

quite, not merely to continue (*very gently*) to try to be good, but to learn how to practise *a new kind of goodness* which God, at such times, sets the task to us. So long as you can escape from yourself into other occupations, of reading or of praying, or of looking after the poor, or of violining, which take you out of yourself, you are hardly being purified, trained and deepened, Sweet. It is only when all these things become, at first sight impossible, when you are, in spite of your ardent (*too ardent*) desire to move more outwards, thrown, as it were, right into the engine room of our small ship: it is only then that your fullest, deepest training begins. Learn, then, Child, *gently* to turn to this thought, indeed this *fact* of your present spiritual opportunities, if even your inability to get to H. Communion is one of these great chances.

Though the expression is a little complicated, this doctrine is deeply consoling; showing us that when we seem good for nothing, fit only to be a burden, our greatest spiritual opportunity has come.

The Baron knew what he was talking about, for he had been practising this kind of thing for a large part of his life. Ever since his conversion in his late teens he had consistently put God first, and in the vicissitudes of his later years had long been accustomed to practise what he called "a quiet, genial death to self." It is the testimony of those who knew him best that he, by and large, always lived up to the lofty spirit of those words that were to find place, most fittingly, on his memorial card:

For what have I in heaven but Thee: and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? (*Ps. lxxiii*).

JOHANN TAULER

By

JAMES M. CLARK

MEDIEVAL GERMANY produced many great scholars and eloquent preachers, but no more lovable figure than the humble friar whose sixth centenary is celebrated this year on 15 June. Both in good and evil times, in years of prosperity and years of persecution, Johann Tauler continued by precept and example to show forth the beauty of the Christian life.¹ About the year 1300 he was born in Strasbourg, a city which had a very active religious life and which was one of the greatest centres of preaching in Europe. He came of a wealthy local family, and although documentary evidence is lacking, it is almost certain that he entered the Strasbourg Dominican friary and proceeded later to the *studium generale* at Cologne, where St. Thomas and Albertus Magnus had once taught. Tauler is never described as "Magister," and it is only in the spurious *Vita* and in later manuscripts that he is given the title of "Doctor," from which we conclude that he did not complete his theological studies in Paris, though he may have visited that city for a short time. His attitude to the learning of the schools shows antipathy rather than enthusiasm. Nor is this surprising: the victory of Nominalism over Realism had shaken the belief in the unaided power of human reason. The will took the place of the intellect in the scale of values and speculation was discredited in the eyes of many religious-minded men.

There can be no doubt of Tauler's sense of vocation. In later life he related how strongly he had been attracted by the seemly discipline of the "saintly brethren," and how he desired to share the austereities they practised. The Order of Preachers was still

¹ The best edition is that of Ferdinand Vetter, *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, xi, Berlin, 1906. English translations by Sister M. Imelda, O.P., in *The Life of the Spirit*, Blackfriars, Oxford, 1948–50, iii, iv (7 sermons); Elizabeth Strakosch, Blackfriars Publications, 1958 (17 sermons). A translation of selected sermons with introduction by Sister M. Jane, O.P., and Eric Colledge will be published shortly.

at the height of its fame. Many young men of noble or patrician birth thronged to join its ranks, renouncing their patrimony in favour of voluntary poverty. Tauler was intensely proud of his Order and its founder. "Truly children," he once said in a sermon to Dominican nuns, "the holy Order to which we belong, you with me, and I with you, is a very sublime and worthy institution. Hence we should all be grateful to Our Lord because He has invited us out of this troubled world in order that we might wait upon Him alone and live for Him alone."¹

It was indeed a troubled world in the third decade of the century. The tragic conflict between the papacy and the empire had reached its culminating point. The Emperor Lewis the Bavarian had defied Pope John XXII and had actually caused himself to be crowned in Rome by an anti-pope of his own choosing. In 1325 John XXII excommunicated the Emperor and laid his possessions under an interdict. Strasbourg was one of the towns that supported Lewis. The local Dominicans remained loyal to the Pope, and Tauler preferred exile to submission to the temporal power. In 1328 he left for Basel, where he was free to say Mass without let or hindrance.

Nor was this all. In 1327 the trial of Eckhart had opened at Cologne. Eckhart had lectured at Strasbourg in 1314² and later he taught in Cologne. It may well be that Tauler was his pupil at one or the other of these two schools. The connection between them, as evidenced in their writings, is so close that personal contact is the only possible inference. The condemnation of their beloved master in 1329 must have been a terrible blow for Tauler and his friend Suso. In addition to this private sorrow there were public catastrophes. After years of famine alternating with destructive floods there came devastating catastrophes: the Black Death in 1347-8 and the earthquake of 1356. It is small wonder that the end of the world was widely expected.

It was against this sombre background that Tauler once preached to nuns on the tenth Sunday after Pentecost, on the benefits to be derived from receiving Holy Communion. He told them of the time when the world was so wicked that the wrath of God was kindled against mankind and "He would

¹ Vetter, p. 269, 17-20.

² Cf., however, Josef Koch, "Kritische Studien zum Leben Meister Eckharts," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicorum*, xxix (1959), 40-1.

have destroyed the world if it were not for the intercession of St. Dominic." Once more the world was in the same precarious state and no one knew what the future held in store for them all. There was no better way than "to give up everything and cast it away and be gloriously united with God in the holy Body of our Lord."¹

Thus, in the midst of almost universal gloom we hear a note of calm confidence and unfaltering faith. It was in this spirit that Tauler worked in Basel, where he profoundly influenced the religious life of the time. Here he met a secular priest named Heinrich von Nördlingen, with whom he formed a firm friendship. Together they became the leaders of a movement known as the Friends of God (*Gottesfreunde*). It was not a religious order, but a group of like-minded persons, friars and nuns, laymen and laywomen, united by common aims and ideals. After Tauler returned to Strasbourg in 1347-8 the good work did not cease. His fame as a preacher spread far and wide. Speaking of him and Heinrich von Nördlingen, Christina Ebner, a Dominican nun of Engeltal, near Nürnberg, wrote about 1350: "They have set the world ablaze with their fiery tongues," that is, with their inspired eloquence. There are strong reasons for believing that Tauler spent a year or two in Cologne, and he may well have stayed there on more than one occasion. He also made frequent journeys to other friaries and nunneries in the course of his pastoral work, but his headquarters were at Strasbourg until his death in 1361. For a time he was the confessor of the Strasbourg merchant Rulman Merswin, the founder of the house of Knights Hospitallers at Grüneworth. According to an ancient tradition, Tauler died in the garden of the Dominican convent of St. Nicholas de Undis, where his sister was a nun.

Tauler's sermons must have made a profound impact on his hearers. He evidently adapted the tone and treatment of his discourse to those whom he addressed, bearing in mind the stage of education and of spiritual growth they had attained. But his influence was by no means limited to the spoken word. The sermons were written down, not by the friar himself, but by the nuns or layfolk who heard them. In this way other religious houses and later generations benefited from them. Excerpts were made from the sermons and were used to form short treatises.

¹ Vetter, p. 268, 33- p. 269, 6.

The demand for edifying reading was great in the friaries, convents, monasteries and Beguine houses in the populous valley of the Rhine and in other parts of the Empire.

The existing material, though incomplete and sometimes imperfectly recorded, is nevertheless adequate to give us a picture of the man behind the words, the personality of the preacher. Contemporary references to Tauler, though not frequent, supplement the impression. He was not a man of great erudition, although he was well grounded in scholastic thought, as it was then taught and interpreted. He did not attempt to extend the range of human knowledge, but he faithfully transmitted to others the knowledge which he had acquired, laying on it the stamp of his own kindly, gentle personality. He was not a systematic theologian, nor were his sermons composed for theologians; they were all in the vernacular and were, in the main, intended for simple, pious folk. Although very few of Tauler's sermons were built up round a central theme, he was quite able, on occasion, to construct a sermon on scholastic lines, dividing the text in the customary manner. A specimen of this technique is a sermon preached on Eph. 4, 1-6.¹ The theme is God's call to mankind. This is divided into four questions: (1) Who calls? (2) To what does He call? (3) How does He call? (4) How should we respond to the call? In the second section is asked: Who is called? The three kinds of persons who are called are described in the traditional manner as beginners, proficients and perfect.

Most of Tauler's sermons are familiar, informal talks. They have every appearance of being hastily prepared or even improvised, the work of a busy priest who had little time for study and reflection, and whose subject-matter lay ready to hand. He was one of the greatest exponents of medieval German prose, and dealt skilfully with the most varied topics in his own homely Alsatian dialect, increasing in a marked degree its flexibility and its abstract vocabulary. He could on occasion rise to great heights of eloquence, when he is carried aloft by his soaring thoughts. But what he has to say is in general expressed simply, in a practical, direct style. There is little use of imagery; there are few *exempla*, or moral tales, such as formed so large a part of the repertory of Franciscan friars.

¹ Vetter, p. 240.

It is characteristic of the practical trend of Tauler's thought that we come across the word *werc* (work, activity) on almost every page of his sermons.¹ They are, in the main, trumpet calls to action, to service. Thus, when preaching on the tenth Sunday after Pentecost, on the words from the Epistle, *Divisiones operationum sunt, idem autem Dominus est*,² he deals with the diversities of gifts with which men are endowed, although the same spirit works in them all. Men should exercise their particular gifts in action. Hard work never hurt anyone. To those who complain that daily drudgery afflicts their conscience and prevents them from attending Mass, he says: "It is not the work itself that causes this restlessness which you feel, but disorderliness." All work is noble, even the meanest and humblest. It is a human duty to work. "If I were not a priest," says Tauler, "and a member of an Order, I should think it a great thing if I could make boots and shoes, and I would gladly earn my bread with my own hands."³ This humility and modesty is typical of the man.

The work should, however, have a meaning, an aim, if it is to be effective: "You should hold in your hands a burning lantern, that is, loving activity. Children, the activity of true, ardent love within and without should never go out of your hands as far as you are able to hold it, and especially in all devotion towards each other according to your capacity."⁴ He sees the danger of quietism, of passively allowing God to act for us and of doing nothing ourselves. He had himself come across this tendency in his pastoral work:

In some places people are to be found who cultivate a false passivity and divest themselves of all activity, and internally they even suppress good thoughts, and then they say they have attained peace and they will not even practise good works, saying that they have got beyond that. They have a devil sitting beside them who forbids anything that might disturb them in their inward or outward peace, in their thoughts, or their behaviour.⁵

Work that is done merely for the praise of men, for one's own interest and profit, is not to be encouraged. There are also questions of the relative merit of our actions. Should one stay away from the office or from Mass in order to help one's

¹ See F. W. Wentzlaff-Eggebert, "Studien zur Lebenslehre Taulers," *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1939, Phil.-hist. Kl., No. 12, pp. 20-6.

² 1 Cor. 12, 6.

³ Vetter, p. 177, 14-27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 216, 11-14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 218, 11-16.

neighbour? Which is the prior duty? Tauler answers that we should give the priority to religious duties unless the neighbour needs our help urgently and action cannot safely be postponed. It is God's will that everyone should do the duty which God has imposed upon him, however inconspicuous it may be; even if it is work that anyone else could do as well. No matter how mean the task, how poor the skill required to perform it, it comes from God and is a special grace. We must render to God an account of our skill and of the work we do for the benefit of our neighbour.

Which is the more valuable, the active or the contemplative life? Are we to follow Martha or Mary? Tauler replies: "Our Lord rebuked Martha, but not for her works, because they were holy and good. He rebuked her for her anxious care, for worrying about her work."¹ He then proceeds to tell us of "One of the greatest Friends of God, who has been a ploughman more than forty years and still is one. And he once asked Our Lord if it was His will that he should give it up and go to sit in the church. But He said 'No.' He was not to do so, he was to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow in honour of His noble and precious Blood."² While condemning "false passivity" as leading to quietism and to hypocrisy, he acknowledges the need for silence and contemplation in the religious life. He postulates a sane balance between receptivity and activity. Although someone may, apparently, be doing nothing but meditating on action, God may be, unknown to him, performing a hidden work in his soul.³ Everyone should find out for himself what kind of attitude best promotes the approach to God.

It is not enough to act, we must act wisely. Our actions must be well directed. We must see the end in the beginning, foresee the consequences of our acts before performing them. One whole sermon is preached on this theme.⁴ The rubric tells us: "This sermon from St. Matthew's Gospel, from the Vigil of the Epiphany, concerning Joseph's fear and the death of Archelaus, teaches us to perceive prudently the end in the beginning of every action and it warns us of the three enemies which assail our souls. The enemies are the world, the flesh and the devil."

Nor should our actions be too vehement. Tauler strives to

¹ Vetter, p. 178, 23-4.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 189, 20-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 179, 20-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-16.

restrain those over-eager souls who rush to carry out their plans without considering whether they have the strength to complete them. They take their own enthusiasm for a guarantee of success. We must not regard our allotted task as our own, but as God's work, done in or by us, and should accordingly be humble. The impulsive souls are only too apt to be irresolute; when the first difficulties arise they are at once plunged into depression.

Unlike Eckhart, who laid the chief stress on the *via unitiva*, the final phase of the threefold way, Tauler says much more about the first stage, the *via purgativa*, or way of purification. It is fatal to try to rush the pace, to run before we can walk. Until the soul has been purified of its grosser elements it cannot proceed to the higher stages of the way. With deep knowledge and experience of the human heart gained by hearing confessions, Tauler recognised temptation in its most subtle forms and exposed it relentlessly. He appeals to the authority of St. Bernard, urging his hearers not to yield to self-deception. He detects hypocrisy and dishonesty both in the active and the contemplative life. They may be present even in good works, such as almsgiving, charitable donations, gifts to the Church, prayer and fasting.

It should be added that Tauler did not in any sense condemn the good works prescribed or approved by the Church. He did not oppose, as Luther later wrongly assumed, pilgrimages, fasting or other bodily austerities. All that he said was that outer works are of no avail if they are not done in the proper spirit, if the doer is not well disposed. They may be useless, even dangerous, if they are allowed to lead to hypocrisy and pharisaism. There is no reason why those who are physically frail should go to extremes in ascetic practices. To console those who are distressed on this account he tells his hearers on more than one occasion of his own sorrow that his delicate health prevented him from observing the Rule of his Order in all its severity. His detractors even accused him of being less strict than they were and boasted of their own austerities. We should be merciful and refrain from judging others. Uncharitableness is a grievous sin and one which destroys the effectiveness of good works. "Children, however many good works you may perform, however good your intentions are, the devil will make you his laughing stock if you are guilty of this sin."¹

¹ Vetter, p. 148, 18-20.

The serious student of Tauler may be puzzled by a seeming inconsistency in the good friar's writings, and this observation also applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to Suso. On the one hand we hear the homely, practical teacher and preacher, who avoids what is too abstract, too speculative, and keeps to the great truths about the moral life, exhorting, admonishing, encouraging or comforting, and at times boldly denouncing evil in all its forms, sparing neither clergy nor laity. But on the other hand, we find passages and even whole sermons in which the speculative element looms largely. The glories of mystical union are painted with glowing colours, the splendours of supernatural experiences are described in the language of Eckhart or Pseudo-Dionysius. We must not exaggerate: these sermons only constitute a fraction of the whole, and few of them contain passages which, properly understood in their context, really verge on pantheism.

These passages are certainly authentic. The very sermons in which the mystical element is most strongly in evidence always contain a phrase or a word that belongs to the specific vocabulary of Tauler. Tauler identified the Pseudo-Dionysius, as did his contemporaries generally, with the Greek convert of St. Paul, and regarded him as a saint of the Church. Indeed, he refers to him as "St. Dionysius." If there was any conflict between his doctrines and those of St. Thomas Aquinas (whom Tauler highly revered), Tauler would be inclined to think that this was the kind of problem which he was not competent to solve. He would leave it to the "great theologians."

Of Tauler's orthodoxy there can be no doubt. "By the grace of God and from Holy Church," he says:

I have received my Order, this habit and my priestly office, with authority to teach and to hear confessions. If it were to come about that the Pope and Holy Church wished to deprive me of these things, I would give them back wholly to them, and would don a grey coat, if I could get one, and I would never again join the friars in my convent. I would go away and never again be a priest or hear confessions, or preach again, all for God's sake. For those who gave me these things can also take them away. It is not for me to inquire the reason, for I would not wish to be a heretic, or to be excommunicated.¹

We come across many of Eckhart's most famous sayings, either

¹ Vetter, p. 255, 11-22.

paraphrased or unaltered, in Tauler's sermons, for instance: "Better one master of life than a thousand masters of arts," or the remark that the soul has two eyes, one internal and the other external. Tauler's attitude to scriptural exegesis is the same as that of Eckhart. He maintains that, in addition to the traditional interpretation of a biblical passage, many new meanings can be discovered: "If one reads Holy Writ and preaches about it and meditates on it, one will find more and more truths never as yet discovered by man."

Like Eckhart and Pseudo-Dionysius, Tauler uses the word *Nothing* of God and speaks of Him as the "Divine wilderness." He explains the meaning of "Nothing" thus: "This is the Nothing of which St. Dionysius said that God was not anything that one can name or understand or grasp."¹ But these phrases and other similar ones, in spite of their pantheistic sound, were in common use in religious circles in fourteenth-century Germany. They belonged to the vocabulary of the Friends of God and were understood in a Christian and not in a pagan sense.

If we examine carefully the mystical passages in Tauler, we find again and again a note of caution. We feel a sense of hesitation, which indicates that this is to be regarded as exceptional, that it is not entirely in keeping with the usual trend and tenor of Tauler's thought. Rarely does he speak of the "spark of the soul," which phrase was first used in German by Eckhart, who found the Latin equivalent *scintilla animae* in Richard of St. Victor and, in a restricted sense, in St. Thomas. Instead Tauler speaks of the "Gemüt" (higher reason, spirit) or of the "ground of the soul," and "ground" was one of his favourite words, as it was with the Friends of God. He uses the word "abyss" of God, signifying that He is unfathomable in His nature, and he also speaks of the abyss of man, but hastens to add that the latter is a "created abyss." Tauler is fond of speaking of "sinking into the Divine abyss." This might suggest absorption into the Divine, which would be pantheistic, but the context shows that Tauler meant "contemplation of the Divine."

The use of the words *gotvar*, *vergotet* (godlike, deified) might easily lead to misunderstanding. But here again we must consider the prevalent meaning of such terms. Although Neoplatonic in origin, they are Christian in significance. Tauler uses them to

¹ Vetter, p. 201, 8-9.

describe the moral transformation of man by grace to the image (*ad imaginem*) of God.¹

The doctrine of the birth of the Word in the sanctified soul by grace may be described as the cardinal teaching of Meister Eckhart. Fr. Hugo Rahner, S.J.,² has traced the long development of this doctrine in its various forms and ramifications from Origen and Gregory of Nyssa through Peter Lombard and Richard of St. Victor. It is not surprising that we find echoes and reminiscences of this conception in Tauler's sermons, though the formulation is more guarded than it was apt to be in Eckhart's writings. Instead of saying that the Word, the Son of God, is born eternally in the human soul, and that by grace man can become the son of God by adoption, as Eckhart does, Tauler usually speaks of the "transformation" or "overforming" (*Überformung*) of man in the Divine image. The meaning of Eckhart's phrase is the complete moral regeneration of man as part of the *corpus mysticum Christi*, as Fr. Kertz has convincingly demonstrated. Why does Tauler tend to avoid Eckhart's phraseology? One can only assume that the cause of this cautious approach was the condemnation of Eckhart. No less than four of the condemned propositions concerned the just man as the son of God. One cannot but think that Tauler, like his friend Suso, believed that Eckhart was innocent, but he did not wish to rebel, or even to seem to rebel, against constituted authority in the Church. It is generally assumed that Eckhart was Tauler's source, but Fr. Rahner suggests that in one case Tauler's doctrine was derived from St. Augustine's *De Virginitate*.

In the most difficult sermon of all, in which we find the most conflicting opinions about the Holy Trinity we come across the following, very cautious and truly Taulerian conclusion:

One could pile up an endless mass of words about this, without saying or understanding anything about the manner in which the super-essential Unity exists in Trinity. On this topic it is better to feel than to speak. . . . It is above the understanding of angels. We commend this theme to the great theologians, for it is their task to find words to express it for the defence of the Faith, and they have good books on the subject, but we should simply believe.³

¹ See Fr. Karl G. Kertz, S.J., "Meister Eckhart's Teaching on the Birth of the Divine Word in the Soul," *Traditio* (1959), p. 363.

² "Die Gottesgeburt aus dem Herzen der Gläubigen," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, Vol. 59 (1935), p. 410.

³ Vetter, p. 299, 15-24.

Tauler was a harmonious personality: there was no conflict between the moralist and the mystic. These were but two aspects of the same rich personality. Like other great religious leaders, he could find the right words for practical men and women absorbed in the problems of their daily round, but he could also inspire the heroes and heroines of the spiritual life in their strenuous efforts. He had to deal with many different types of persons. Most of his sermons were, it is true, preached to nuns. Nowhere in Western Christendom were the nunneries so numerous as in Upper Germany; they far outnumbered the friaries. In Strasbourg alone the Dominican sisters had seven houses. At this time not merely individuals, but whole communities were affected by a mystical movement which had no parallel elsewhere. Ecstasies, visions, trances, stigmata were the order of the day. It was not Tauler's task to stimulate mysticism, but rather to restrain it, and to guide it into safe channels. What he had to say about the union of the Divine and the human fell on willing ears, but it had to be carefully defined. Tauler was wise enough to know when to warn and when to encourage others. The keynote of his life was struck by the words: "Dear Lord, Thou knowest I seek nothing but Thee."¹

¹ Vetter, p. 265, 23.

ANVIL-DING AND TONGUE THAT TOLD

1. *The Early Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*

By

W. H. GARDNER

“IN THE LAST FEW YEARS the movement of Hopkins’s stock on the critical market has been rather ‘bearish.’” This recent pronouncement, by Dr. Helen Gardner in the *Critical Quarterly*,¹ came to my notice at the same time as a statement by a good youngish poet, who was reported by a fellow Oxford student as having marked the “bearish” trend in some such words as these: “Hopkins can still be admired for his remarkable character, but as a poet he has had his day. English poetry cannot be written like that.” Now Dr. Helen Gardner’s assessment is perhaps true as regards magazine articles, but it is discredited by the fact that in the last three years three highly appreciative critical studies of Hopkins have appeared, the countries represented by the writers being respectively Canada, the U.S.A. and France.² Last May I was privileged to attend a third-year seminar at Yale in which, after the reading of a student’s paper on the poet’s middle-period poems of God and Man, the fifteen men present discussed these works for over an hour with an impressive critical sensibility. The attitude of Mr. Bernard Bergonzi (the name has slipped out) is a sensible one for a poet to adopt: very few poets at any time can hope to write as well as Hopkins. They would be wise to avoid imitating him (his own practice was to “admire and do otherwise”); but they would be foolish if they ceased to

¹ Summer, 1959, p. 113.

² *The Shaping Spirit of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, by Alan Heuser (O.U.P.), 1958. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of His Ignatian Spirit*, by David A. Downes (Bookman Associates), New York, 1959.

Robert Bridges and Gerard Hopkins—1863–1889: A Literary Friendship, by Jean-Georges Ritz (O.U.P.), 1960.

read him and unfortunate, to say the least, if they failed to understand him and to recognise his unique quality. Anyhow, the Oxford University Press was probably not worried by the alleged "bearish" movement on the critical market when it decided in 1959 to reissue the poet's miscellaneous prose writings,¹ which I shall now consider.

Twenty-three years after the publication of *The Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, the late Humphry House's original edition has now been revised and enlarged in a second edition consisting of two handsome volumes, House's work having been admirably completed by Mr. Graham Storey. Very wisely House, an editor of ability and infinite pains amounting to genius, entrusted the presentation of the augmented *Sermons and Devotional Writings* to a Jesuit of the English Province, Fr. Christopher Devlin, who has proved himself one of the most sensitive and scholarly of all the many commentators on Hopkins that his Society has produced.

Although few if any of these writings were expressly intended for publication in their present form, the fact that they have been brought together and edited by three first-rate scholars, with all the documentation and critical apparatus usually accorded only to the most firmly established classics, is a remarkable testimony to the importance of the work, and no less to the quietist faith of the poet-priest who, unpublished in his lifetime, was content to leave the fate of his literary remains in the hands of his Master, Christ, that "best of critics."

In considering the value for posterity of the old and new matter now published in what appears to be a definitive form, I shall deal first with the *Journals and Papers*, chiefly because they sprang primarily from the poet's observation and sensibility between his eighteenth and thirtieth years, the period from 1862 to 1874. Reading this book is like watching and hearing the man forging the tools of his art, responding to the anvil-ding of direct experience, preparing himself to "tell" or toll in musical words that unique vision of life and nature which was already taking shape in his mind. Just over one-half of the 580 pages are given

¹ *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Humphry House and Graham Storey; second edit. (O.U.P.), 1959.

The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins, edited by Christopher Devlin, S.J.; second edit. (O.U.P.), 1959.

up to editors' Notes and Appendices, but no serious student of Hopkins will feel anything but gratitude at being offered so much elucidation and biographical material, together with appreciations by experts of the poet's work as an amateur philologist, draughtsman, and musical composer.

The augmented philological notes taken from the early diaries have been subjected to a learned commentary by Mr. Alan Ward, who has rightly stressed their value in helping us to understand Hopkins's theory and practice in the handling of poetic language. Mr. Ward says:

As a poet and scholar Hopkins was naturally interested in the exact uses of words and the delicate sense-differences between words of similar meaning. As a more than usually accurate and comprehensive observer, he was also closely interested in their form and sound. It is not surprising therefore that he was interested in etymology, at least in so far as this established a relationship between words of different meaning and revealed the root meaning from which they were presumed to have stemmed (p. 499).

Even as a boy Hopkins was gropingly intent on fusing, "inscaping" into one distinctive and revealing pattern, both the sound and sense of words. "Many of the word-lists show in miniature his future delight in a rich and 'heightened' vocabulary and in packed alliteration and assonance. But they also show an unusual absorption in purely philological problems" (p. xx). And "What a philologist he would have made!" exclaims Mr. Ward on p. 507. Indeed, the latter bears out in his own commentary what I have myself demonstrated elsewhere—that Hopkins knew how to breathe poetic fire into the dry bones of philological research.¹

Let us see, for instance, how key words entered in the diary clarify the use of certain words in the poems:

See *grind*, etc. *Grando* meaning splinters, fragments, little pieces detached by grinding, hence applied to hail (1863, p. 7).

In 1878 he wrote, in *The Loss of the Eurydice*, st. 7:

. . . there did storms not mingle, and
Hailropes hustle and grind their
Heavengravel. . . .

Here the poet exploits the sound-sense relation between "grain"

¹ See my *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (O.U.P., 1958), Vol. II, pp. 397-9.

("gravel") and "grind," and also the alliterative link between certain words expressing speed and violence: hustle, hasten, hurry, hurl, hurtle. This means that both the "gr—" of *grind*, *gravel* (cf. grit, grate) and the "h—" in *Hail-* and *hustle* evoke atavistic sensations of friction and windy speed. Of course, the "onomatopoetic theory" of the origin of language, which Hopkins thought (on the strength of the above felicities) "hadn't been given a chance," is embarrassed by the very different force of such words as "grace," "green;" "halve," "heal."

The word lists also make us aware of the sense-sound connections between the italicised words in the following, as Mr. Ward points out:

My natural old Egyptian *reed* gave way;
I took of vine a cross-barred *rod* or *rood* (*Poems*, 17).¹

Generations have *trod*, have *trod*, have *trod*;
And all is seared with *trade* . . . (*Poems*, 31).

Yet Mr. Ward's feeling for the inscape of verse fails him when he finds only "simple alliteration" in

Down in dim woods the diamond-delves! the elves'-eyes!
(*Poems*, 32).

He seems to miss what Hopkins heard—the delicate effect of muffled d's; the change of "key" in *delves—elves'*—, and the sudden opening out, a suggestion of upward-shining lights, in the alliterating e's. Yet we are grateful to him for pointing out once more this poet's feeling for vowel gradations or "tones" in related words, and for showing how such a diary entry as "slip, slipper, slop, slabby (muddy), slide, perhaps slope"² contributed something towards the inscaped intellectual and aural compactness of Hopkins's best poems.

This flair for sound-sense relations in common words is to some degree the mark of all good poets. A richness in vocalic and consonantal texture can be found even in the art-concealing art of George Crabbe:

Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade. (*The Village*)

¹ Poem-references are to *Poems of G.M.H.* (O.U.P.), 1948; 5th impr. 1956.

² *Journals and Papers*, p. 9.

How subtle, too, is the change from the soft 'shoot' to the harsh 'charlock' in line 3!

Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud,
Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood;—
Here dull and hopeless he'd lie down and trace
How sidelong crabs had scrawled their crooked race.

(*Peter Grimes*)

Crabbe had noted, instinctively no doubt, the common aural-semantic elements in such groups as *slender, slim; slimy, slither, slope, slump, slum; clasp, cling, clam, claw; crab, crook; scrawl, scrawny, scrape, scratch*.¹

As Mr. Ward shows, Hopkins's perception of vowel gradations and consonantal similarities in sense-related or etymologically cognate words was original only in so far as he was preparing to incorporate the "philological passion" in his own conception of verse inscape. For the substance of his philological notes he drew freely from the standard dictionaries and philological works of his time. As it is usually assumed that there is no vital connection between scientific linguistics and creative literature, there is a special value in Mr. Ward's citation from Farrar's *Essay on the Origin of Language* (1860), which Hopkins must have read:

There are even broad general laws by which the various degrees of intensity in sound are expressed by the modification of vowels. Thus high notes are represented by i, low sounds by a, and the change of a or o to i has the effect of diminution, as we see by comparing *clap, clip; clank, clink; pock, peck; cat, kitten*, etc.

How well Hopkins recognised this law in his poetry can be seen in:

... this to hoard unheard,
Heard unheeded leaves me a lonely began (*Poems*, 68)

Here the diminution from plenty to a hollow emptiness and flat frustration through a high headnote of anguish is heard in the gradation from a broad to a high and then from a high to a round and at last a flat vowel ("gan.")

The serious student of poetic theory and practice will read

¹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 8 and 507-8, where Hopkins discusses *cling, clam, clammy, claudere, close, clasp* and *cleave*, and finds the original idea that of closing or fastening together.

Hopkins's diary jottings in conjunction with his suggestive Lecture Notes on *Rhythm and the Structural Parts of Rhetoric-Verses*, in which, as Professor of Rhetoric at Manresa House in 1874, he began to develop his theory of Counterpointed and Sprung Rhythms and poetic inscape. The first process was that "loosening of rhythm" which W. B. Yeats considered so necessary, and we cannot doubt that it was Hopkins, not Yeats or Bridges, who first gave prosodic precision to the loosening begun by Blake, Coleridge and Whitman. Hopkins is the one consummate master of poetic rhythms which combine the maximum flexibility and subtle expressiveness with architec-tonic or structural control, the variety-in-unity of a freely modulated stanzaic pattern. Hopkins sums up his findings and his own later practice in a fragmentary essay called *Poetry and Verse*, which probably belongs to the period of the Lecture Notes. His definition of poetry might be bettered in phrasing, but hardly in substance:

Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake. (Poetry is in fact speech only employed to carry the inscape for the inscape's sake—and therefore the inscape must be dwelt on . . . (p. 289).)

To find out what he meant by *inscape* one should first read the graceful Platonic dialogue *On the Origin of Beauty*, where the central idea is that beauty consists in the harmonious relations of parts to a whole, and then pass on to a careful study and correlation of the many uses and contexts of the words *inscape* and *instress* in the essay on Parmenides, where the terms make their first appearance, and in the *Journal* (1866-74). In the latter we can trace the evolution of these concepts as the result of his close, first-hand observation of a wide range of organic natural phenomena. The relevant extracts, which have been culled and printed chronologically in the Penguin *Poetry and Prose of G. M. H.*, show how the poet's theory of poetic *inscape*, as it concerns structure, rhythm and texture, is derived from his perception of that "inscaped" and "instressed" variety-in-unity which constitutes the formal beauty of flowers, trees, clouds, tumbling water, etc. Just one example must suffice here

to illustrate this derivation: an outflying spray on a tree, a thing seemingly untidy and redundant but still capable of being integrated, by the eye, into the total pattern or *inscape*, is called a "hanger"—the very name which Hopkins gives to those extra syllables in a verse foot which, coming after a strong stress and before a significant pause, are outside the formal scansion and yet necessary to the total rhythmical expression of thought and feeling, e.g.

O in túrns of tēmpest, me hēaped thérē; me frántic to avóid thee
and flée? (*Poems*, 64).

One's understanding of what *inscape* meant to Hopkins is deepened by a perusal of the fine reproductions of his sketches and finished drawings in Appendix I. Mr. John Piper's short note on Hopkins as a draughtsman is interesting but inadequate. He apparently sees no significant anticipation of Van Gogh's technique in the unfinished "Shanklin, Isle of Wight, 1866" (Plate 24) and nothing noteworthy in the delicate almost oriental manner of "Sun Corner, Cliffs near the Needles Point" (Plate 14). "At the Baths of Rosenlauui" (Plate 28) presents the facts of tumbled rocks and water with an uncannily dramatic solidity, and visual *inscape* is suggested in many graceful sketches of trees and clouds. When Mr. Piper says that Hopkins's drawing reaches "what he would have called a Parnassian level in poetry" he seems to be paying him a bigger compliment than he intends, because "Real Parnassian [is] only written by poets and is impossible for others as poetry, as practically it is as hard to reach the moon as the stars, but something very like it may be" (p. 38). Even if Hopkins achieves only "something very like it," these drawings, with the philological and prosodic notes, the philosophical essays, and the musical compositions given in Appendix II, all help to underline his versatility and to bring out his feelings for the many modes of *inscape* which are upheld by *instress* in the great "burl" of being.

In the Parmenides essay he says that an undetermined Pantheist idealism runs through the fragmentary writings of the Eleatic philosopher, whose great text is that "all things are upheld by *instress* and are meaningless without it." The opposite of *instress*, of *inscape*, of "the flush and foredrawn" is "a want of oneness . . . waste space that offers nothing to the eye to foredraw." By the

foredrawing eye Hopkins seems to mean the eye of the artist, or potential artist, which can seize the essential, predestined, "flush," rounded-off pattern of one "cleave" or cross-section of the burl of being and so completes or realises the inscape of the whole. In this way the perceptive mind co-acts with a certain "strong necessity," which for Shelley was "the one Being's plastic stress," but which for Hopkins could only have meant the will of God, as he tells us explicitly in his commentary on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. We can trace the beginnings of this feeling for all that is "bound in the bonds of strong necessity" in those parts of the *Journal* where he speaks of instress and inscape. Looking at Ely Cathedral he finds that "the all-powerfulness of instress in mode and the immediateness of its effect are very remarkable." On one day the blue of the sky is "charged with simple instress"; on another, bluebells in Hodder wood, all hanging their heads one way and making a "shire of colour" a foot above the grass, give off a glare of light which, like water, is "good to float their deeper instress in upon the mind." Among some delicate flying shafted ashes there was one "of single sonnet-like inscape," and he saw one notable dead tree, "the inscape markedly holding its most simple and beautiful oneness up from the ground through a graceful swerve below (I think) the spring of the branches up to the tops of the timber." Incidentally we should note the many fresh homely images and jewels five or so words long in his descriptions of nature: pigeons—"strutting and jod-jodding with their heads"; waterfall—"great bushes of foam-water" . . . "like milk chasing round blocks of coal"; snow on a glacier—"like bright-plucked water swaying in a pail"; "a slender race of fine flue cloud"; calm sea—"with little walking wavelets edged with fine eyebrow crispings"; evening—"a slash of glowing yolk-coloured sunset." He was always tearing at inscape, trying to find the "inlaw" and to feel the instress: "The shores are swimming and the eyes have before them a region of milky surf, but it is hard for them to unpack the huddling and gnarls of the water and law out the shapes and the sequence of the running." Yet how well he does all this in the sketch reproduced in Plate 12!

A valuable addition to this volume is the inclusion of several more of the undergraduate essays, in which Hopkins ranges from poetry to philosophic commentary, often with a surprising

maturity of thought. In *Poetic Diction* (1865) he adds his weight to Coleridge's refutation of Wordsworth's theory. His points help to explain why so much modern verse and *vers libre* seems to fail as poetry, in spite of the fact that modern verse as a whole represents the triumph of Wordsworth's ideas (barring only the restriction he would place on the use of imagery). This is what Hopkins wrote at the age of twenty-one:

. . . metre, rhythm, rhyme, and all the structure which is called verse both necessitates and engenders a difference in diction and in thought. The effect of verse is one on expression and on thought, viz. concentration and all which is implied by this . . . vividness of idea.

The essential artifice of poetry, he continues, is the structure of continuous Parallelism or recurrence, which can be either abrupt or chromatic. Recurrence in structural pattern begets an answering parallelism in words and sense. Accordingly he would modify Wordsworth's claim for the language of common speech and writing as the language of poetry by adding that "an emphasis of structure stronger than the common . . . asks for an emphasis of expression stronger than that of common speech and writing, and *that* for an emphasis of thought stronger than that of common thought." The concentrated parallelism of imagery is natural in poetry, but "a great abundance of it in prose" is displeasing: not being functionally called for, it interferes with the continuousness of its flow. All this amounts to a preparation of the critical mind for the "current language heightened" (and very daringly heightened) of his own mature poetry.

Two other essays contain aesthetic findings of permanent value. *On the Signs of Ill Health and Decay in the Arts* reasserts the artist's eternal search for the absolutes of Truth and Beauty calling it "the lawful object of Art," and with this we may link that other Keatsian statement with which, in *The Probable Future of Metaphysics*, Hopkins challenged the prevalent philosophy of continued flux: "there are certain forms which have a great hold on the mind and seem imperishable, such as the designs of Greek vases and lyres . . ." (p. 20). He believed that Beauty is more essential to art than "Truth in the scientific sense of the word"; he saw that in the afternoon of a life or epoch the clearer view of Beauty can become dimmed by staleness or mere

convention; hence he concludes with what deserves to become a classic axiom: "Art slips back while bearing, in its distribution of tone or harmony, the look of a high civilisation towards barbarism. Recovering must be by a breaking up, a violence . . ." —and how well his own poetry has proved his point!

In the philosophical essays we find some shrewdly diagnostic and prognostic observations. In *The Position of Plato in the Greek World* he sees both the greatness and limitations of this philosopher, whose writings "are found to be full of thoughts which are not reconciled and have since acquired definiteness in opposite systems"—in Theism, one might add, and in Communism. Because Plato found public opinion as corrupting as the Sophists, "his only hope for politics was a far-off arduous and rigid system such as must always make its inventor weary and incredulous himself." Our latter-day Platonist Planners have not demurred at the "arduous" and the "rigid," though they have at the "far-off"; some, like H. G. Wells, have grown weary and died, and others, like Hitler, have died of other people's incredulity and weariness; but the soul of the Planner still goes marching on. However, Hopkins's conclusion on Plato is fair enough (my italics): "yet how deeply his teaching is associated with that which goes beyond rhetoric into poetry . . . and the ideals he wishes us to accept, *as the unearthly love*, are made persuasive by the images he gives us for them."

The next essay, *The Probable Future of Metaphysics*, surveys contemporary forecasts by the Positivists and contends that Positivism cannot oust metaphysics before (i) force and matter are proved to be one thing, and (ii) "that which to all appearance alone has the power of disposing force itself, that is mind, has been subsumed under the head of the material." Some of our contemporary scientific philosophers may well believe that the first has almost been accomplished, and the second too, if we can safely assume that matter has only a phenomenal existence. Nevertheless in his ignorance or wisdom Hopkins declares for a deeper reality by emphasising, in effect, the quasi-mystical basis of instress and inscape and all his own poetic insight. I grant you, he says (as if forecasting Freud) that psychology will exercise its own office over almost all the field now held to belong solely to metaphysics . . . but it is ill-founded in supposing an emptying out and barrenness in metaphysics as a

consequence. "It will always be possible to show how science is atomic, not to be grasped and held together, 'scopeless,' without metaphysics." First, the current dialectical philosophy of flux will be opposed by Platonism or, more strictly, Realism; secondly,

Psychology and physiology may withdraw to themselves everything that is special and detailed in the action of the mind, and metaphysics will be left as the mode by which we give the bare statement of there being *another side than the phenomenal when we regard things*—and nothing more than this, mere abstraction as far as any attempt at apprehending it goes, and always to be pushed back to the outermost skyline of science.

There speaks the natural Platonist; and for Arthur Koestler, too, at the end of his "History of Man's Changing View of the Universe"¹ (a cautionary tale against the *hubris* of science) a pointer seems to have swung back to Plato:

The dials on our laboratory panels are turning into another version of the Shadows in the Cave. Our hypnotic enslavement to the numerical aspects of reality has dulled our perception of non-quantitative moral values; the resultant end-justifies-the-means ethics may be a major factor in our undoing.

One feels that if Hopkins were alive to-day and had Koestler's knowledge he would use similar words, admonishing us, as Koestler does, as "worshippers of the new Baal, lording it over the moral vacuum with his electronic brain."

For Hopkins moral beauty was "immortal beauty." In his essay written for Walter Pater on *The Origin of Moral Ideas* he says that "the desire for unity, for an ideal, is the only definition which will satisfy the historical phenomena of morality." Then, as an artist, he puts his finger on the paradox which ought to disturb both the creative and the critical mind:

In art we strive to realise not only unity, permanence of law, likeness, but also difference, variety, contrast.

(For instance, in literature there must be *moral* as well as other kinds of diversity.) Hopkins does not deal fully with this seeming clash between ethical and aesthetic aims; if he had done, he might have had to admit that universal moral perfection would render *Macbeth* and *The Brothers Karamazov* obsolete or meaningless. But without actually posing the awkward question "Sanctity

¹ *The Sleepwalkers*, 1959, last page.

or Shakespeare?" Hopkins replies that "in life as in art, the desire of unity is prior to that of difference, and whereas in art both are in our power, in moral action our utmost efforts never result in its perfect realisation." The implication seems to be that a certain moral ideal stands to moral diversity as the sun stands to chiaroscuro and tone-values in the visual arts, or, better still, as Christ stands to the erring faithful who seek Him. It is also implied that literary art is the means to an end other than mere pleasure; for if it does not conduce to the desired unity of a moral order its preoccupation with moral values might render it subversive, since it could hardly be neutral. All this seems to contradict Hopkins's dictum that poetry is the inscape of speech which is contemplated solely for the inscape's sake (see above); but the distinction he made later between "mortal" and "immortal beauty" clarifies his position, and is in line with his assertion, in the essay under examination, that "we desire unity because the ideal, the one, is our only means of recognising successfully our being to ourselves, it unifies us, while vice destroys the sense of being by dissipating thought. ἔστι γὰρ η̄ κακία φθαρτικὴ ἀρχῆς,¹ wickedness breaks up unity of principle"

(p. 83)

For good grows wild and wide,
Has shades, is nowhere none;
But right must seek a side
And choose for chieftain one (*Poems*, 110).

Dr. James Stevens's Appendix II on "Hopkins as a Musician" is a welcome addition. We are given the full scores of all the extant compositions, together with a documented technical commentary, the work of an expert who understands both Hopkins's need for creative self-expression through music and also the relation in which his gift for melodic invention stood to his prosodic theory and practice. In his excellent critique of the poet's handling of time, accent and expression, the commentator notes the skilful manner in which this amateur composer's song-settings interpret the words of a poem, sometimes bringing out the intended feeling better than the lyric poet (Dixon or Bridges) himself; but still more could have been said about the tonality, period- or school-affiliation and ultimate quality-for-the-ear of these interesting compositions. The air of

¹ Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* vi. v. 6.

Fallen Rain seems to me exquisite and original and too good for the rather trivial lyric. The harmonised setting, for two choirs, of *The Battle of the Baltic* (worthy subject) has a breezy eighteenth-century sea-ballad tonality and is still only a sketch that requires a good deal more working out; but its bold experimental accenting and pointing and its suggestive ground bass motif, which catches the spirit of endeavour and heroism, indicate that something quite worthwhile might have been made of the piece. One would like to have had Dr. Stevens's views on the comparisons drawn by Mr. Norman Suckling (in *Gabriel Fauré*, 1946) between Hopkins's advanced views concerning "modal harmony" and traditional modulation on the one hand and Fauré's musical practice on the other—a comparison which claims that the two contemporaries were thinking on the same lines and of which "One may see how right Hopkins was" is the keynote.¹

On page 457 Dr. Stevens says that in my "Hopkins and Music"² I accept uncritically the opinions of the earlier authorities; but as I happened to be in almost complete agreement with those authorities, my criticism had to be restricted to a doubt about one of Mr. Suckling's points³ and an objection, which I will repeat, to the following bold conjecture by Mr. John F. Waterhouse:

Might he, perhaps, granted a longer life, have turned consistently to his own verse and become a neo-Greek poet-musician, creating simultaneously with the words a barless, unaccompanied enharmonic music?⁴

If Mr. Waterhouse means a *single-toned* enharmonic music his opinion, I repeat, is against all the evidence. Apart from Hopkins's keen desire and keener struggle to master harmony, we should allow that most English poetry is single-toned compared with his, which, with its abundance of alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme, half-rhyme, vocalic scales and rhythmic subtleties, is always, so to speak, richly orchestrated. *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*, for instance, seems even now to be crying out for a free modal setting, with harmony borne by stringed instruments and oboe. Hopkins believed with Aristotle that in art the

¹ For the relevant quotations from Mr. Suckling, see my *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Vol. II, pp. 390-1.

² *Ibid.*, Appendix A, pp. 379-92.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

complex is more satisfying than the simple—always provided that the essential unity and clarity are not sacrificed.

Finally, I must here acknowledge the soundness of Humphry House's reasoning in Appendix V. I agree that Hopkins's laconic entry in the *Journal* under 11 May, 1868—"Slaughter of the innocents"—is more likely to refer to the burning of his early poems prior to his becoming a Jesuit than to his resolve to remain celibate; and accordingly the relevant footnote in my Penguin edition has been corrected in the latest impression.¹ Yet I still think that my somewhat Freudian conjecture will stand as what Hopkins would call an "underthought," lurking a little dubiously in the cellarage of the "overthought," to which it is as metaphorically germane as "child of my brain" is to "child of my flesh."

CHRISTIANITY AT OSTIA *A New Survey*

IN HIS NEW, eagerly awaited volume on Roman Ostia,² Mr. Russell Meiggs devotes a long chapter to the religious life in the town, and a sizeable appendix to the vexed question of the Christian martyrdoms at Ostia and at Portus, the harbour-area of Ostia which detached itself about the time of Constantine to become a separate township. This investigation of Ostian Christianity is of course no pilot survey, and Mr. Meiggs has sensibly made extensive use of the work of the doyen of Christian archaeology in Italy, De Rossi, and of the recent studies of Calza and Becatti.

Ostia stands at the mouth of the Tiber some fifteen miles from Rome. Its unique archaeological importance derives from the township's having been abandoned in the fifth century. There is no modern village superimposed, as at Herculaneum, to impede excavation. Since systematic digging began some fifty years ago, about two-thirds of the work has been completed, and eventually the whole site will be uncovered. It is highly probable that further material illuminating Christian life at Ostia awaits discovery; and Mr. Meiggs does well to enjoin caution against over-confident interpretation of existent evidence in relation to the earliest growth of Christianity.

¹ Page 112.

² *Roman Ostia*, by Russell Meiggs (Oxford University Press, 84s).

From the literary sources, chiefly Christian, the importance of Ostia in the development of institutional Christianity has long been recognised. St. Augustine mentions that in the early fourth century the Bishop of Ostia had the privilege of consecrating the Pope Elect as bishop, when that was necessary; this argues for a seniority and a prestige attaching itself to that see. Further, the Council in the Lateran, summoned in October 313 by Constantine in his attempt to heal the Donatist schism, was attended by Maximus, Bishop of Ostia; and in the following year the presence of the Bishop of Portus at the Council of Arles reveals that by this date there were two separate bishoprics at Ostia and at Portus. The so-called Martyrology of Jerome records a substantial list of third-century martyrs from the two towns. And finally St. Augustine's *Confessions*¹ makes mention of the death and burial at Ostia of his mother St. Monica towards the close of the fourth century.

How far have the excavations helped to confirm this literary evidence, and to supplement our knowledge of the growth of early Christianity in Italy? It must be admitted that the finds to date are surprisingly meagre, providing the salutary reminder that in more complex problems archaeology can be no more than an ancillary to the documentary evidence.

There is in fact no inscriptional evidence which would definitely establish Christianity at Ostia before the third century. Mr. Meiggs justly comments that this is not wholly surprising for the earlier period at least. Ostia did not become the gateway to Rome from the East until first Claudius and then Trajan had dredged out artificial harbours. (The main port for Rome hitherto was Pozzuoli on the Gulf of Naples, where St. Paul had landed in 60, and where he "found some brethren who prevailed on us to stay with them for a week."²) As soon as Portus Augusti, as Claudius's new harbour at Ostia was called, had been established, it was placed under close imperial control. Portus now handled most of the traffic from the Eastern sea-route, and there one would expect the first manifestations of Christianity in the area. But the direct supervision of the Roman emperors from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, and the administrators of whom Tacitus and Pliny are typical, would certainly not have permitted what they regarded as an *exitiosa superstition* to lay an overt challenge to the traditional religion or to the Emperor-cult. Such Christians as there were had perforce to be unobtrusive, and as there has been no systematic excavation of the settlement around the harbours, no inscriptional evidence as yet attests their existence.

Ostia became the administrative centre for supplies to Rome, and

¹ IX 10 ff.

² *Acts xxviii* 14.

successive emperors adorned it with splendid temples and other public buildings. It was a Rome in microcosm, and shrines to the traditional deities are conspicuous; especially notable is the cult of Vulcan (whose *pontifex* supervised all the Ostian shrines), of Cybele, of Hercules, and of Castor and Pollux. Evidence has also been gathered of a priesthood of Augustales, and a temple of Rome and Augustus in the Forum is certain. The cult of numerous later Emperors has also been established.

Elsewhere in the Empire, despite sporadic persecution, the second century was a period of steady growth for the Christian Church. It had spread throughout Asia; in Africa, according to Tertullian, every city contained as many Christians as pagans, and Carthage had its Bishop by 197. In Rome itself Tacitus reports a *multitudo ingens* of Christians as early as 64. It is inconceivable that Ostia remained wholly unaffected, though there are certain factors militating against extensive conversions, Mr. Meiggs does well to mention the apparent paucity of Jews in the township; now it was amongst the huge Jewish colony in Rome that St. Paul first evangelised. Again, Ostia's numerous imperial officials were scarcely likely to embrace many Christians before the end of the Antonine age. But Christians there must have been, amongst the lower orders at least. Hence "earlier Christian cemeteries may yet be discovered. If they existed they are likely to have been some distance from the town, and in such areas there has been no systematic exploration."

Mr. Meiggs suggests that the third-century spread of Christianity "coincides with the period of economic stress"; "it spread widely during the economic distress of the third century." The alternative, much more probable explanation for the sudden change is that the relaxation of persecution after Marcus Aurelius allowed existent Christianity to become more overt amongst an ever-widening circle. There had never been any specifically anti-Christian legislation other than the famous rescript of Trajan, which allowed wide discretion to local governors. The climate of tolerance at Ostia was dependent on the attitude of the Roman court itself, and towards the end of the second century more moderate counsels emerged. Septimius Severus' son, Caracallus, was *lacte Christiano educatus*, and though, as a result of civil commotions in Palestine, Septimius forbade any conversions to Judaism or Christianity, no extensive measures of repression are on record until the middle of the third century.

Persecution, however, broke out afresh in the reigns of Decius and of Valerian. In the years 250-60 there was a considerable number of martyrs, including the Pope, St. Fabian: the Bishops of Antioch and Jerusalem: St. Lawrence: and at Carthage St. Cyprian. Jerome's Martyrology lists under Ostia the name of Aurea, who according

to the literary tradition was banished from Rome for her refusal to abandon Christianity. She was killed by drowning at Ostia after an incident which led to the mass conversion of a section of the soldiery. Also executed were Cyriacus, Bishop of Ostia, and a certain Hippolytus who had pleaded with the imperial investigator for an end to the persecution.

Sundry inconsistencies in this story reveal contamination and accretion. But the authenticity of the martyrdoms is confirmed by the archaeologist. The fifteenth-century church of S. Aurea was built on the same site as an earlier one, and a half-column was recently found to be inscribed with the martyr's name in lettering which Mr. Meiggs dates to the fifth century at the latest. Cyriacus also had a shrine in his honour, which no longer stands. But near its site a sarcophagus contained the inscription *hic Quiriacus dormit in pace*. Delehaye, the chief authority on the Christian Martyrologies, believed that the form of this inscription betrays neither bishop nor martyr. But Mr. Meiggs regards this as hypercritical, and inclines to Vagliari's view that this is indeed the tomb of Bishop Cyriacus. Finally Hippolytus (often wrongly confused with the Roman opponent of Pope Callistus) was commemorated by a church which was sacked by the Vandals when they attacked Portus in the fifth century.

This group of martyrdoms is in the literary sources attributed variously to the reign of Alexander Severus (222-35), Trebonianus Gallus (251-3), and Claudius Gothicus (268-70). The first is most unlikely, for Alexander's syncretist tendencies allowed Christ a place in his Pantheon, and Christians complete toleration. Most modern authorities, including Mr. Meiggs, favour the reign of Claudius, but the executions at Rome in 250, including that of the Pope, make a date of about 251 even more likely.

The Martyrologies record a considerable list of third-century executions at Portus, thereby indicating that Christianity had obtained a firmer hold there than at Ostia. Archaeology has confirmed some of these entries, notably that of Bonosa, about whom the literary tradition records detail markedly similar to that of Aurea, and those of Taurinus and Herculanus, whose names appear on a fifth-century sarcophagus.

One of the most engrossing features of third-century religious life at Ostia is the emergence of the cult of Mithras, the Persian god of created light. It is well known how after the Antonine age this cult achieved fantastic popularity throughout the Empire. Becatti has described how no fewer than fifteen Mithraic shrines at Ostia have now been unearthed, and, as these are dispersed, others may still await discovery. There is also abundant evidence for the worship of Cybele; a shrine to Attis has been identified, and inscriptions

refer to a *taurobolium* and a *criobolium* in connection with this cult. Finally, the worship of Isis and Serapis is well attested. Though the temple of Isis has still not been found, inscriptions mention her priests; and her consort Serapis, popularly associated with the Sun-god, also had his shrine. The remark of Minucius Felix, *haec Aegyptia quondam, nunc et sacra Romana sunt*, has a close relevance at Ostia.

This evidence of developing interest in the mystery-religions offers a necessary framework from the psychological viewpoint for the dramatic growth of Christianity. Mithraism had its lustral baptism, and indeed a form of eucharist, on which Tertullian passed the characteristic comment: *panis oblationem a diabolo scilicet*.

The challenge of Mithraism was not finally overcome until the accession of Constantine. Anastasius records that Constantine built a basilica at Ostia, dedicated to SS. Peter, Paul and John. But no impressive edifice such as Constantine's record of church-building elsewhere might lead one to anticipate has yet been discovered. Two fourth-century Christian churches have been identified, the first (significantly) having been converted from a Mithraic building. The other Calza claims to be Constantine's basilica; Mr Meiggs regards this identification as premature in view of the parsimonious style of building and the thin evidence of dating.

This book offers one very interesting if speculative suggestion concerning fourth-century Ostia. This concerns the House of the Fishes, the sole private residence suggestive of Christian occupation. There is a late tradition which relates how Gallicanus asked the emperor Constantine for his daughter Constantia's hand; but Constantia wished to remain a Christian virgin. Gallicanus was eventually converted to the Christian faith, and retired to Ostia, where he lived with the devout Hilarinus. There, as the story goes, the house was enlarged to offer shelter to pilgrims. Could this house of the two martyrs have been the House of the Fishes, which appears to have been extended to provide further accommodation? It is at any rate a pleasing fancy.

No archaeological evidence was needed to establish that St. Monica was buried at Ostia, but it is pleasant to record that in 1945 two boys playing near the church of S. Aurea found a part of the epitaph which a certain Anicius Bassus had had inscribed on her tomb.

Finally, a puzzling fourth-century inscription found in the market; *lege et intellige mutu loqui ad macellu*. Here Calza's assumption that *mutu* was intended (what a pointless announcement that would be!) is justly contested. *Lege et intellige* has a strong Christian flavour. "Could this refer to a Christian miracle, the recovery of speech by a dumb man in the market?"

P. G. WALSH

REVIEWS

THE CHRISTIAN THEATRE

The Christian Theatre, by Robert Speaight (Burns and Oates 8s 6d).

FEW PEOPLE can be as well qualified as Mr. Robert Speaight to write on the Christian Theatre, for few have been as deeply involved in it. He created the part of Becket in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, he was the voice of Christ in Dorothy Sayers's *The Man Born to be King*, he played the principal character in *This Way to the Tomb*. As a writer he is well known for his reasoned defence of the Catholic position. He is as much at home in French as he is in English, and is therefore in no danger of insularity. He is extremely well informed.

The present publication is little more than a monograph, and the difficulty must have been to know what to leave out. His account of the medieval theatre is necessarily summary, and he has little to say of (what little is known of) the staging and costuming of Miracle and Morality plays. He is indeed chiefly concerned with their substance, with what they had to say, and the language in which they said it.

He rightly stresses the importance of the *Mystère d'Adam*, probably written between 1146 and 1174, and the earliest surviving French play entirely in the vernacular. It was more than a hundred years later that the medieval drama passed out of the hands of the clergy and into the hands of the laity, but the change was inevitable once it had ceased to be performed entirely within the church and had come outside, to be played in front of the most magnificent of permanent settings: the west façade of a cathedral. He notes that "what finally brought the Mysteries out into the open air was their connection with the Corpus Christi procession."

In these the play became a pageant, with a *succession* of scenes mounted on moving carts, and we can gather some idea of what these wagon-stages looked like from that curious relic, the Ommeganck procession in Brussels. Mr. Speaight does not mention this, but it was elaborately depicted in the early seventeenth century in a series of paintings by Denis van Alsloot (some of which are in the Prado and some in the Victoria and Albert Museum); and these, in spite of the admixture of Renaissance elements, do give us an adequate notion, late as they are, of what had survived from the medieval theatre.

The Mysteries were succeeded by and overlapped with, the Morality plays and, as Mr. Speaight remarks, this was a real departure; for "where the Mysteries and Miracle Plays had told a story, the Morali-

ties preached a sermon. A new seriousness, as well as a new secularism, was in the air, although the authors of these homilies can hardly have guessed what they foreshadowed—the end of the Christian drama as they had known and practised it."

The influence of the Morality plays survived the Renaissance and the Reformation. One might say that Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* was a Morality play; and we still find the medieval "Vice" at work in Richard III and Iago. And that brings us to Shakespeare, and the core of Mr. Speaight's book.

To include Shakespeare at all in a book of this kind is, of course, to issue a challenge. The days have long gone by when a Victorian commentator could suppose that "some Puritan pastor" comforted his last moments. Whatever Shakespeare was he was not a Puritan: not even a Protestant in any useful sense. His father, almost certainly, and many of his friends, were Recusants. And this is the "mystery" of Shakespeare: this is what he had to hide. The furniture of his mind (if the phrase may be permitted) was Catholic. But was his "total gesture" Catholic, or even Christian? Does he take his place in the story of the "Christian theatre?"

It is Mr. Speaight's thesis that he does. Certainly Shakespeare accepted Christian morals. Not only in his works but in the Elizabethan drama generally, "it is never suggested . . . that chastity is not a virtue, virginity a jewel and marriage an indissoluble sacrament." Justice and mercy are his themes—but are justice and mercy the monopoly of Christians? "Without an understanding of Christian doctrine they [the plays] are quite unintelligible." *Macbeth?* *Othello?* *Troilus and Cressida?* *Antony and Cleopatra?* *Lear?* Would these really be unintelligible to a Japanese, or an Arab? Here it would seem that Mr. Speaight claims too much.

He is on surer ground in his excellent account of the Jesuit drama. The Jesuits made it an important part of their educational system and, as Mr. Speaight pertinently reminds us, Molière as well as Corneille was a Jesuit pupil. What will be new to many readers is his account of the Spanish *auto sacramental* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the use which Calderón was able to make of this rigidly ecclesiastical form.

All this, together with the chapter on Corneille and Racine, is of great value; but, to many, the most interesting part of Mr. Speaight's book will be that dealing with the modern Catholic theatre and its effect on what he calls "the Post-Christian Public." He deals with the plays of T. S. Eliot, Dorothy Sayers and Christopher Fry, with James Bridie and Graham Greene; and has something illuminating to say about each. He analyses the work of Claudel and Henri Ghéon in France, and that of Hofmannsthal and Hochwalder in Germany. The

latter's play of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Paraguay is known to English audiences under the title, *The Strong are Lonely*.

This little book is a mine of information, and if it raises more questions than it answers that is perhaps in the nature of the case.

JAMES LAVER

ST. HELENA IDYLL

St. Helena Story, by Dame Mabel Brookes (Heinemann 35s).

WHAT ELSE the British Government could have done with Napoleon in 1815 except send him into perpetual exile at St. Helena is a difficult question to answer. Possibly the hasty decision arrived at by a flustered and not very intelligent lot of Ministers was, in view of all the circumstances, the best one. But it was the manner in which the affair was subsequently carried out that has left an indelible stain upon the reputations of all who were unlucky enough to be concerned in it. So much this latest re-telling of the story makes quite clear. Dame Mabel is a great-granddaughter of the William Balcombe in whose house, The Briars (now, thanks to Dame Mabel, French property), the Emperor passed the first three months of his residence in the island. The episode of the friendly relationship which arose between the Balcombe family and their distinguished guest, although it forms no part of the Napoleonic legend, is sufficiently well known. It was based upon correct behaviour and a mutual respect, enhanced by a resemblance to Josephine which the Emperor fancied he saw in Mrs. Balcombe. But the most extraordinary part of it was the particular friendship which grew up between the great man and the daughter, aged fourteen. Miss Betsy was a hoyden, pretty and spoilt, given to practical jokes; a terror to solemn young men and a cause of some anxiety to her parents. But underneath the uninhibited exterior she was of a singularly sweet and affectionate disposition. The complete lack of respect with which she treated the Emperor might well have annoyed a lesser man (as it did indeed enrage his staff), but he was quick to sense the good heart which formed the basis of her character and allowed her to take whatever liberties she pleased. The story of the development of the friendship between this fantastically assorted pair is strangely moving and it is here very well described. Before the end of that fateful year, however, the idyll was over. The Imperial party had been moved up to Longwood, a bleak barn of a place, infested by rats, and the reign of the unspeakable Hudson Lowe had begun. The rest might well be silence. Betsy and her family left the island in 1818. Of her subsequent history, of which one would like to know more, we are only told that she married and on one occasion

apparently had an opportunity of conversing with Napoleon III and passing on to him her childish memories of his uncle. What, one wonders, did that enigmatic character make of it all? As regards the lesser figures, the two admirals on the English side, Sir George Cockburn and Sir Pulteney Malcolm, come out best. And on the French side, Madame Bertrand. Hardly anyone else. Certainly not Lord Bathurst and not even Wellington himself, who, writing to Sir Pulteney from Paris in 1816, says: "You may tell Bony that I find his apartments at the Elysée very convenient and that I hope he likes mine at Mr. Balcombe's." (As Sir Arthur Wellesley he had spent a few nights there on his return from India in 1805). Is it too much to picture the admiral's features as he read this somewhat heartless pleasantry showing signs of faint distaste?

JOHN MC EWEN

HOMO AESTHETICUS

The Forms of Things Unknown, by Herbert Read (Faber 25s).

CLASSICAL ART is all surface: romantic art, kernel throughout. With some such statement, Sir Herbert Read—embryologist of the creative act—would appear to agree in these "Essays towards an Aesthetic Philosophy."

With his adaptation of psycho-analysis to the interpretation of a work, Sir Herbert among the critics is a sort of pre-natal clinician. He seeks for the distinctive traits of a work before its birth, in the artist's womb. And what he finds there is not merely something which accounts for the work's pre-determining form, its inner shape of wholeness, its living pattern, but forces which help to maintain those values "that in the past have been inseparable from the idea of a civilisation." These "values are threatened by the developments, variously known as industrialisation, mechanisation, automation and mass communication, that together constitute the technological revolution of our time." In opposing *homo aestheticus* to these powerful prevailing trends, Sir Herbert might seem to be over-optimistic. But he believes that the existence of art is guaranteed by "certain psychological facts about the mind and its formative functions."

The fourteen lecture-essays in this volume were delivered to a select audience of philosophers and psychologists who meet every year at Lake Maggiore to make up a gathering known as the Eranos Tagung. Addressing such listeners, Sir Herbert fittingly acknowledges the many thinkers who have confirmed him in his orientation. These include Ernst Cassirer, Susan Langer, K. Kofka and Wolfgang Kohler. Sir Herbert's expanding eclecticism can always find room for the new witness without invalidating the testimony of the old. Under

the influence of *Gestalt* psychology, Sir Herbert finds the prototype of harmony in the mind itself (as earlier, from a reading of D'Arcy Thompson, he had found it in external nature). From poetry to peace, Sir Herbert believes we find the workings of this harmony manifested. "Peace," he writes, "may be physical, a state of rest or harmony; or peace may be spiritual or psychic and is then better described as a state of silent growth. We must distinguish an arrest of movement, which in the human psyche would be death, and that harmony which is movement so perfect that it is imperceptible, like the movement of a spinning top. But even this harmonic movement does not represent the full meaning of peace, for the invisible movement of the human psyche is also an unfolding of form, a growth whose perfect analogy is the flower."

This is a noble prose statement of Sir Herbert's conviction and may remind some of us of its fine verse counterpart, *The Golden Disc*. Whether or not we agree with Sir Herbert, we must allow that his thought remains balanced, his style lucid, and his sentiments humane.

Catholics, particularly, will be interested in the four-page appendix to *The Creative Experience in Poetry* in which Sir Herbert courteously crosses swords with Professor Maritain over the use of the term "unconscious."

DEREK STANFORD

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH

A Rocking-Horse Catholic, by Caryll Houselander (Sheed and Ward 10s 6d).

MISS HOUSELANDER's personality was so marked that we hope that a full biography of her will be written, for here, as in *Born Catholic*, she felt bound to omit much that we should think relevant. The book is really a study of the mystery of faith. Thus the main influence in her life was a K.C., "Smoky," who longed to believe, but could not. It was he who urged her mother to have the child conditionally baptised at the age of six. She had been baptised after a fashion by a clergyman-uncle directly she was born, for she seemed unlikely to survive; she was always tiny, sick, and nervous, and, we may say with no unkind suggestion, neurotic. Apart from this one wholly reliable friend, Smoky, and a Catholic doctor and his family who were her close and constant allies, her relations with others, not least with Catholics, were extremely unstable. Even her relationship with her mother, who became a perpetually fussing convert, was unfortunate. She was almost driven out of her mind by her mother and a priest who made her confess and re-confess until she became hysterical

with scruples. At last she became so weak that they said that Communion, for which she longed, "couldn't do her any harm now." She received it in *Viaticum* and was at once cured. Throughout her life she remained convinced of the Real Presence, and believed that the Blessed Sacrament was in the keeping of the Roman Church regardless of the moral or mental quality of its ministers. When she was nine, her parents separated and she was sent to a series of schools, the first of which she loved. It was French, and passionately nationalist, and when the 1914 war broke out, only one Bavarian lay-sister remained. Caryll saw her one day, unutterably lonely, gaunt and unattractive, cleaning shoes and crying inconsolably. She also "saw" that her head stooped under a crown of thorns. She said, "I wouldn't cry, if I was wearing the crown of thorns like you." "What do you mean?" asked the nun. "I don't know," said Caryll. Nor did she then. Other schools followed, and one illness after another, till at sixteen she was sent to live with her mother. This lady's ill-advised charity led to their being cut by their certainly no more charitable Catholic friends. Owing to the girl's extreme sensitiveness and, she repeats, oddities, she began to wonder if she could find the Blessed Sacrament elsewhere than in the Roman Church. One evening, on 17 July 1918, she suddenly "saw" in the street Christ crucified, but dressed royally, His head bowed beneath a huge crown, like "a gigantic Russian icon," she described it, though she had never seen any icons. After a while, perhaps next day, she learned that on 17 July the Tsar had been assassinated. She saw in him Christ humiliated, dying, yet resplendent over London and over the world. She felt that from Russia, Christ, now crucified there, would arise and sanctify the world. She began to take up art, and took every imaginable job in order to survive in even the most squalid circumstances. She was constantly enquiring about religion, going from one Christian sect to another, and also to the Buddhists and Jews. Each had something to offer, but the true Church had all of it, and in Hyde Park, through the Catholic Evidence Guild, she heard its voice. The Church did not wait for souls, but came out for them. In a crowded underground-railway she had her final "vision" of the Church; Christ fulfilling Himself in all things. And to the Church she returned, never having really left it. Her vocation was to write, and a poem by her, composed fifteen months before her death, is added to her book by Mr. Sheed, to whom she sent it. A review cannot turn into an essay about neurosis or self-abandonment as possible elements in a life of holiness, nor on the nature of "sight" in experiences such as hers. But this book gives many a clue, and her other books are a uniquely strange and precious gift.

C. C. MARTINDALE

SHORTER NOTICES

Modern Catholic Thinkers, An Anthology edited by A. R. Caponigri.
Introduction by M. C. D'Arcy, S.J. (Burns and Oates 63s).

MODERN CATHOLIC THINKERS contains extracts from the writings of authors living or recently dead. Six out of the thirty-seven contributors are English or American; most of the others are French or German. The extracts have been chosen for their own sake, though undoubtedly it is wished to show that the Catholic is neither senile nor servile, merely repeating himself and, as Fr. D'Arcy says, "polishing an old set of ideas." The contents are arranged in seven sections: God, Man, the Church, the Political Order, History, Religion and Culture, and Witness. The sources are fully acknowledged on pages ix to xii. It is clearly impossible to review, in any technical sense, a book like this, of over six hundred and fifty pages, every article in which deserves particular attention. Dr. Caponigri has, we think wisely, governed the arrangement of his book according to the principle that it is better to start from what is actually being thought and written than from some abstract principle, recognising that "as long as we live, we cannot but enquire." The very fact that we possess a creed is a stimulant. We are urged to examine all its implications.

His own principle is to begin with what is nearest and most immediately present to our consciousness, namely Man. But this is explicitly a Catholic book, and so no complete notion of Man can be formed apart from God. The first article, by Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Anthropology and Religion," practically covers the subject of the entire book, for it shows that the creative Word of God demands a responsive "word from Man," which is perfectly uttered in Christ. But since man is essentially social, Christ continues to utter Himself through His "Body, which is the Church." We may say that all these chapters are controlled by the great mystery of God in Christ, and Christ in men, and indeed in the whole world, since man is part of a universe, and catches up all of it into himself. So we mention together Fr. M. C. D'Arcy on "Human and Divine," Fr. Y. de Montcheuil on "The Ideal of Christian Humanism," Fr. de Lubac on "The Church," and Fr. Congar, O.P., "In the World and Not of the World." But we would add in close connection articles by Fr. Tielhard de Chardin, S.J. and by Fr. Karl Rahner, S.J. The former is taken from the author's *Le Milieu Divin*, which should be read concurrently with or immediately after his *Phenomenon of Man*. It might almost be a commentary on St. Paul, who tells us (Romans 8: 18-27) that all creation is expectant, groaning and in its birth-pangs along

with us, awaiting the full adoption of God's sons. Fr. Rahner's *On the Theology of Death* recalls to us that we live in a redeemed world, so that if we respond to grace and participate in that redemption, death is no more a punishment but a passage into a fuller life: *vita mutatur, non tollitur*, and we are free to wish, with St. Paul, to set sail whenever God sees fit. *Cupio dissolvi*: our very bodies are mysteriously to re-live. In the section "The Political Order," we meet names like Don L. Sturzo, J. Maritain, and Fr. J. C. Murray, S.J., who writes on "The Freedom of Man in the Freedom of the Church." Dealing with History are Fr. J. Daniélou and Christopher Dawson. Sigrid Undset's "Letter to a Parish Priest" reveals that courageous, vivid and original personality whose loss we so much regret. We also regret having to omit mention of so many articles in this book. But we must emphasise the value of the extracts in themselves, since many are drawn from bulletins not easily accessible. We agree that they will not, as a rule, be easy reading, simply because they indicate so very much hard thinking.

Four Absentees, by Rayner Heppenstall (Barrie and Rockliff 13s).

IN THE QUASI-CULTURAL HIERARCHY of the B.B.C., Mr. Rayner Heppenstall is not without honour. Some of us, however, recall him better as a writer of impressive and diverse gifts: as the hierophant-poet of *Sebastian*—a dionysian "religious" poem composed partly at Campion Hall; as the author of *Apology for Dancing*—the only "serious" British work upon the aesthetics of ballet; or as the critic-impresario of *John Middleton Murry—a study in excellent normality*. The list could be lengthened to include fiction and other forms of expression.

Now, in *Four Absentees*, Mr. Heppenstall has given us a picture of himself in relation to a quartet of eminent figures: Eric Gill, George Orwell, Middleton Murry, and Dylan Thomas. To say that all four were Mr. Heppenstall's friends would be to underestimate his talent for detachment. Three of the four befriended him, and two at least featured as master-figures to an erstwhile restless and roving disciple. "He is like the pariah that will always bite the hand that feeds it," Murry once recorded in his diary; while Mr. Heppenstall, on the former's death, admitted how suddenly shaken he felt. "Odd," he reflected, "when I thought how little Murry had meant to me these twenty years."

From the literary point of view, the merit of this book is fresh and obvious. Mr. Heppenstall goes behind the scene to greatness. He has thrown away all that V.I.P. cardboard so extensively used in reminiscences. His eye is his own; as odd, precise, and cruel as the eye of Degas in the wings.

Orwell appears as a sado-masochist, Gill as a sensual holy "hearty," Murry as a man who could never let up, and Thomas as one terrified of death. Readers of THE MONTH will take an interest in the story of the author's near-conversion and of Fr. D'Arcy's part in this incomplete encounter. Some readers may, indeed, marvel that Mr. Heppenstall ever got so far. The whole force of his mind seems to work for dissidence, negation, and disbelief.

Four Absentees is a fascinating book. There are few words of respect for others in it and the author has not dipped his own image in whitewash. Mr. Heppenstall clearly sees one aspect of the truth: its destructive one. We know this is not the whole of it, but how very readable Mr. Heppenstall makes it!

The Fifth French Republic, by Dorothy Pickles (Methuen 15s).

THE FIFTH FRENCH REPUBLIC succeeds the same author's *France: The Fourth Republic* and contains a straightforward exposition of the provisions of the 1958 Constitution together with an account of how they came to be made, what they were intended to achieve and how they have been interpreted to date. An appendix gives the text of the Constitution translated by Mr. William Pickles.

The commentary, which is devoted to the legal rather than the political implications of the Constitution, carefully weighs the weaknesses and ambiguities of that document against the traditions and realities of French political life. The political significance of the constitutional innovations is discussed, but there is little speculation on the future of the French political scene or of its leading personalities. The chances of the Fifth Republic's surviving its architect are, however, pronounced slender, "The Fifth Republic will not be secure until de Gaulle's Republic has become the French Republic."

The French, as Mrs. Pickles notes, are attached to written documents, but the provisions of this document appear to be viable only as long as *le style du Général* is there to inspire their implementation, as long, that is, as France has confidence in General de Gaulle. For it is difficult not to agree with the opinion quoted from M. Raymond Aron, "The combination of an executive à la Louis XIV, and a Parliament disciplined à l'anglaise by the efforts of M. Debré is, in the long run, an impossibility."

So much heated controversy has been aroused by the new Constitution that it is a pleasure to be conducted through its actual provisions by so level-headed a guide as Mrs. Pickles. If anything, the contentiousness of some of its articles is under-estimated and one wonders whether M. Mollet is quite so far to the Left as Mrs. Pickles suggests, or if the fangs should not be shown in even a thumb-nail

sketch of M. Soustelle. On reading this book one is struck by the impermanent nature of the political unity shown at the referendum. One can only hope that the new Constitution enables the General to succeed in the tasks which it was designed to enable him to perform while that largely fortuitous unity still exists.

The Numbered Account, by Ann Bridge (Chatto and Windus 16s).

THOSE WHO REMEMBER *Illyrian Spring* will be a little disappointed with Ann Bridge's latest novel. Her writing has not deteriorated. It is simply that it does not fit easily into the medium of the mild thriller. The pace of *The Numbered Account* is not a wild one. It remains, nevertheless, a little too rapid for the style of one whose strength has always lain in a marked ability to convey atmosphere; to draw her readers into the reality of situations as far removed from each other, for example, as those of Hungary on the brink of war twenty years ago or the emergent Turkey of Ataturk. Readers of *A Place to Stand* and *The Dark Moment* will recollect how, in each case, they were brought so effortlessly to share in the enchantment of a story, which was made the more moving by the perceptive writing of its author and the strength of the values upheld in it. The novels of Ann Bridge please most when one is left to linger over them. In this case, one is not allowed laxity to do that. One has the feeling of being moved along too rapidly through a series of situations which seem improbable and slightly contrived. Throughout, the Swiss background remains a constant factor. It is, as one would expect, most beautifully described. On that account alone many will find this latest novel of Ann Bridge a pleasure to read.

Betsy Sheridan's Journal, edited by William Lefanu (Eyre and Spottiswoode 30s).

WHAT was once called the Ascendancy in Ireland produced a network of families possessed in no small measure of a sense of their own self-importance. Translation to England sufficiently early tended to mitigate this over-esteem, as it did in the case of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his attractive sister Betsy, whose letter-journals Mr. Lefanu has published.

Travelling with a crusty, intelligent, tiresome father about London, the spas, and the fashionable resorts, Betsy kept Alicia, her elder Dublin sister, posted with general and family gossip. Her father's haughty actor-manager manners, which put him on the wrong side of Garrick, were filially disapproved by Betsy, whose criterion in most things was "the natural." Indeed, we can read her pages of chat

as betokening that whole change of tone in eighteenth-century social feeling. Again and again, she criticises artificiality as a social norm; and the pert decorum and debauched politeness, rags of the Restoration tradition, are noticed and abominated by her. Here, for example, is how she depicts the manners of a "Mrs. Carter" whose naturalness she could not praise enough:

She seems about sixty. She is rather fat, not very striking in her appearance, dressed in a scarlet gown, petticoat, a plain undress cap and perfectly flat head [a reference to the absence of the piled-up coiffure then in vogue], a small work-bag hanging at her arm, out of which she drew some knotting [*sic*] as soon as she was seated—but no fuss or airs about her. She entered into conversation with that ease which a person has who has both their thoughts and words at command, but no *toss of the head*—no *sneer*—no emphatic look—in short no affected consequence of any kind.

It was this simplicity, ease and naturalness which was incubating a large social change to be mirrored in the sentimental revolution of the early Goethe in his Romantic phase. "The Hamiltons," notes Betsy, "received me as usual. While I was with them Miss Wooley came in, she thought they were alone and had brought with her a picture she had just finished, it was Charlotte looking at Werter's Urn. The Idea was taken from a print, but the painting was extremely well executed."

But these hints of a re-orientation in taste make up only the Journal's under-current. As might be expected, family affairs and fads are to the fore. We see Betsy's brother, Richard Brinsley, tiring of the theatre in the claret-saturated Whig politics of the Prince Regent's set. We see the Whig grandes and *grandes dames* at play, a profligate performance which Betsy hated, the more so since her clever brother played so wholeheartedly with them.

The journals, which Mr. Lefanu has inherited, were once the property of his great-great-grandmother Alicia, the recipient of Betsy's letters, and cover the periods 1784-6, and 1788-96. Mr. Lefanu has provided a stimulating "background" Introduction, and his work of editorship is to be commended.

And I Shall be Healed, by Edeltraud Fulda, translated by J. Coombes (Heinemann 21s).

THIS BOOK IS OF HIGH INTEREST not only because of its account of a cure at Lourdes in 1950 from Addison's disease, but because of the picture it gives of an Austrian family during and after the recent war. Fräulein Fulda spares us no detail of the process of her thirteen

years of illness. Apparently she noted it down from day to day not without a certain tartness of criticism for which in her Introduction she apologises. In fact, save in the case of the President of the medical commission in Lourdes and his successor, and of Cardinal Innitzer, who gave her the official sanction that her cure was miraculous, she alludes to persons and places under assumed names. Her cure is the more interesting because her family and she herself seem to have been only moderately devout. Marriage with a *divorcé* was calmly contemplated and Edeltraud developed a devotion to Our Lady quite late. But, once inspired to go to Lourdes, she made heroic efforts to get there, and was amply rewarded. Not that life was easy for her after her cure. She was an object of curiosity, of jealousy, even of disbelief. Quaintly, it was an unbelieving doctor who converted an even more sceptical priest to acknowledge that her illness had been beyond human healing. An unusual and strikingly unsentimental book about a miracle at Lourdes.

Carthage, by B. H. Warmington (Hale 21s).

THE HISTORY of North Africa in the Classical period has received generous attention from German and more especially from French scholars. But there is no monograph in English even remotely approximating to Meltzer-Kahrstedt's *Geschichte der Karthager* or to Gsell's *Histoire Ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*.

This new study by Mr. Warmington, who lectures at Bristol, is very welcome but falls between two stools. Publishers doubtless know their markets best, but who is the "general reader" who is willing to tackle as learned and comprehensive a work as this, and yet does not demand some citation of sources and opposed views? So far as undergraduates are concerned, the absence of some pages of references is a crippling loss in any work; and there are such controverted problems in connection with Carthage, largely because no Carthaginian history has survived, that some annotation is doubly necessary.

A few factual errors, and occasional grammatical solecisms, mar an incisive account and perhaps suggest that the author might have found the more leisurely pace of scholarly publication more congenial. But this is a competent and knowledgeable synthesis of the seven hundred years of Carthage's existence.

The Fifth Testament, by E. A. Gray (Bodley Head 12s 6d).

WE AGREE that a "background book" about Palestine as it was in Our Lord's time which would be suitable for older children, or indeed for adults, would be very welcome. Nor would we be hostile to its taking the form of a story, though that kind of literature demands

great skill. We think it a mistake to use a semi-archaic style. Grammar is apt to become shaky: "thou might go in peril"; "lest thou art caught"; and realism is not genuinely helped. Britannicus, then, is a veterinary surgeon in the Roman Auxiliary Horse and serves in Palestine during the last year of Our Lord's life. Touched by His kindness to animals, and the spirituality of His look, he is bewildered by His miracles, especially the raising of Lazarus. If the book seems to us rather hustled, especially in the account of Our Lord's arrest and trial, this may well correspond with the confused state of Palestine as Britannicus saw it. Children might be misled by being told that this "authentic" reconstruction is "based on the assumption" that a Roman urn was found at Glastonbury containing the original scroll in Latin. But why is this described as the fifth Testament? The Four Gospels are at once alluded to, and it is suggested that this document was written by one intimately connected with the events it describes, whereas the Gospels were written "long after (Christ's) death." Even if we admitted this, it would not make this scroll into a fifth Testament. Several standard books of reference are listed at the end.

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